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POLITICS

Biden just signed a bill that could ban TikTok. His campaign plans to stay on the app anyway



The Senate passed legislation Tuesday that would force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform under the threat of a ban. Here's what to know.

Photos 4



BY WILL WEISSERT
Updated 4:02 AM UTC, April 25, 2024

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WASHINGTON (AP) — When President [Joe Biden](#) showed off his putting during a [campaign stop at a public golf course](#) in Michigan last month, the moment was captured on TikTok.


Forced inside by a rainstorm, he competed with 13-year-old Hurley "HJ" Coleman IV to make putts on a practice mat. The Coleman family posted video of the proceedings on

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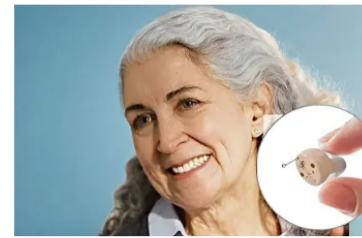
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Forced inside by a rainstorm, he competed with 13-year-old Hurley "HJ" Coleman IV to make putts on a practice mat. The Coleman family posted video of the proceedings on the app — complete with Biden holing out a putt and the teen knocking his own shot home in response, over the caption, "I had to sink the rebuttal."

The network television cameras that normally follow the president were stuck outside.

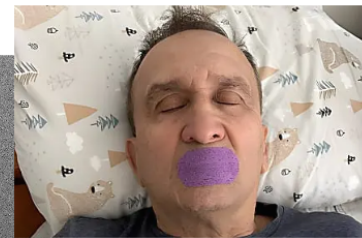
Biden signed [legislation](#) Wednesday that could ban TikTok in the U.S. while his campaign has embraced the platform and tried to work with influencers. Already struggling to maintain his previous support from younger voters, the president is now facing criticism from some avid users of the app, which researchers have found is a primary news source for a third of Americans under the age of 30.



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"There's a core hypocrisy to the Biden administration supporting the TikTok ban while at the same time using TikTok for his campaign purposes," said Kahlil Greene, who has more than 650,000 followers and is known on TikTok as the "Gen Z Historian."

What to know about the 2024 Election

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"I think it illustrates that he and his people know the power and necessity of TikTok."

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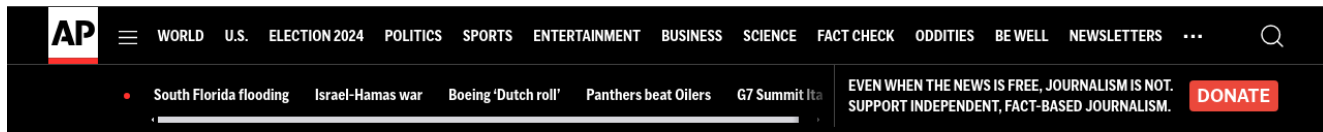


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The Biden campaign defends its approach and rejects the idea that White House policy is contradicting its political efforts.

"We would be silly to write off any place where people are getting information about the president," said Rob Flaherty, who ran the White House's Office of Digital Strategy and now is deputy manager of Biden's reelection campaign.

Flaherty said Biden's team forged relationships with TikTok influencers the 2020 election and that the platform has only gotten more influential since then, "growing as an internet search engine and driving narratives about the president."

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The Biden campaign says that an increasingly fragmented modern media environment requires it to meet voters where they are and that TikTok is one of many such places where would-be supporters see its content, in addition to platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

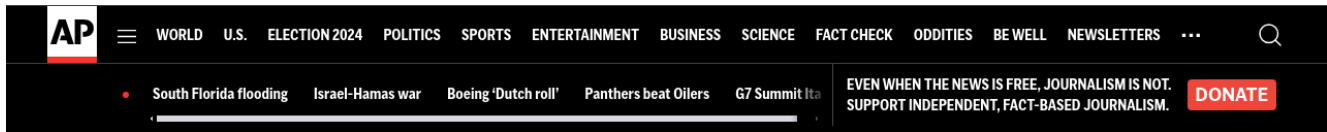
It has produced its own TikTok content, but also relied on everyday users who interact with the president. That includes a post from a family that ate fries and other fixings from the Cook Out fast food chain when Biden recently visited Raleigh, North Carolina, as well as Coleman's putting video.

Opponents of TikTok say its ownership by Chinese company [ByteDance](#) gives Beijing a dangerous amount of influence over what narratives Americans see as well as potential access to U.S. user data. Chinese national-security laws allow the ruling Communist Party wide latitude over private business, though the U.S. has not made public evidence that the Chinese government has manipulated the app or forced ByteDance to do its bidding.

The law Biden signed Wednesday would force ByteDance to sell the app to a U.S. company within a year or face a national ban. ByteDance has argued the law violates the First Amendment and promised to sue.



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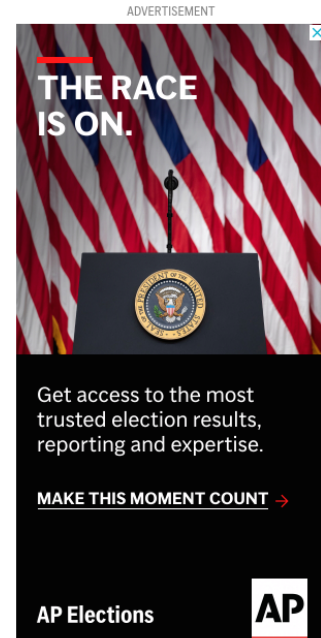


Former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, now publicly opposes a TikTok ban after issuing an executive order while in office trying to ban the app if ByteDance didn't sell it.

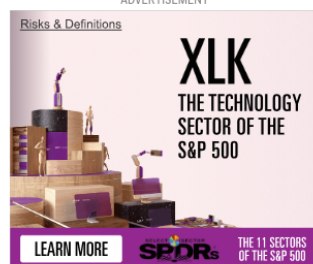
The White House doesn't have an official TikTok account and Biden banned the app on most government devices in December 2022. Yet the Biden campaign also officially joined TikTok on the night of this year's Super Bowl, as the president shunned a traditional gameday TV interview to instead spread a political message with the platform.

Former White House press secretary [Jen Psaki](#) convened a virtual briefing in 2022 for more than two dozen of the app's influencers to discuss the U.S. approach to Ukraine, a gathering later parodied on "Saturday Night Live."

There have been scores of other such events, including an influencer party at the White House last Christmas and a State of the Union watch party in March. During Biden's recent, [\\$26 million campaign fundraiser](#) at New York's Radio City Music Hall with former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, there was an influencer happy hour and an after-party where attendees interacted with Biden.



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White House press secretary [Karine Jean-Pierre](#) said that the legislation Biden signed "is not a ban. This is about our national security." She added that the White House isn't saying "that we do not want Americans to use TikTok."

TikTok has 170 million U.S. users and a [study released last November](#) by the Pew Research Center found that about a third of U.S. adults under 30 regularly got news from TikTok, compared to 14% of all adults.



Adults under 30 are more likely than U.S. adults overall to oppose a ban on the use of

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Adults under 30 are more likely than U.S. adults overall to oppose a ban on the use of TikTok in the United States, according to an [AP-NORC poll conducted in January](#). Nearly half of 18- to 29-year-olds are opposed, compared to 35% of U.S. adults.

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About 2 in 10 U.S. adults said then they use TikTok at least once a day, including 44% of 18- to 29-year-olds. Among 18- to 29-year-olds, 7% say they use TikTok "almost constantly" and an additional 28% are using it "several times a day."

Priorities USA, a leading Democratic super PAC, is spending around \$1 million this cycle to help fund more than 100 TikTok influencers who produce pro-Biden content ahead of November, and views those efforts as an extension of traditional organizing and communications initiatives.

Even if TikTok is eventually banned, most of its influencers are on other platforms that could continue to take their content, especially YouTube and Instagram, said Danielle Butterfield, Priorities USA's executive director.

"TikTok users are online generally and that's a lot of different places," said Butterfield, who was also deputy director of digital advertising for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

Biden, meanwhile, has seen his standing with young people decline. About one-third of adults under 30 approve of how he's handling his job as president, according to an [AP-NORC poll conducted in March](#) — a sharp drop from the roughly two-thirds approved when he first entered office.

Greene studied history at Yale, served as the school's first Black student body president and graduated in 2022. He attended past White House events as an influencer, including a Juneteenth celebration and a West Wing event for the Inflation Reduction Act, a sweeping health care and green energy package, where he met both Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

About a year ago, however, Greene says he began posting about Biden's championing a sweeping 1994 crime law that activists have long said contributed to the mass incarceration of racial minorities. He also criticized Biden's current administration for what he called "a lack of specific policy made for Black Americans."



Since then, while Greene continues to receive more general emails from the Biden administration, he said says he's no longer invited to more personal events while some "creators who fell in line, who are less critical" are still going.

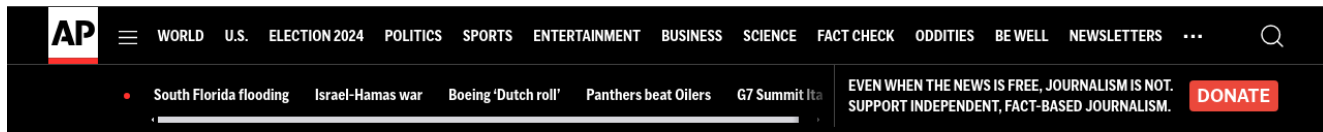
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administration, he said says he's no longer invited to more personal events while some "creators who fell in line, who are less critical" are still going.

Flaherty, Biden's deputy campaign manager, said the campaign has paid influencers in specific instances, like when their content has been used in ads, and that some content creators who work with the campaign have raised concerns about legislation forcing divestment. But he doesn't see it having a major Election Day impact.

"I think young voters aren't going to vote on TikTok," Flaherty said. "They are going to vote on issues, which are discussed on TikTok but they're also discussed other places."

Greene, however, said young voters' frustration with the Biden administration in other areas — particularly its [handling of Israel-Hamas war](#) — have combined with the TikTok divestment legislation to spell political problems for Biden.

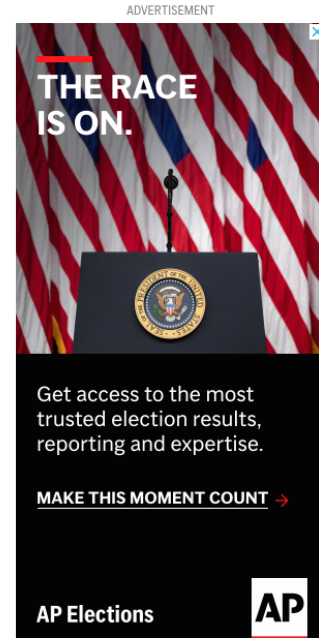
"There's no ability for me to overstate how that exacerbates the outcry," he said, "and the dissatisfaction that people already have."

Associated Press writer Linley Sanders contributed to this report.



WILL WEISSERT

Will is a national political reporter based in Washington.

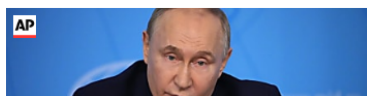


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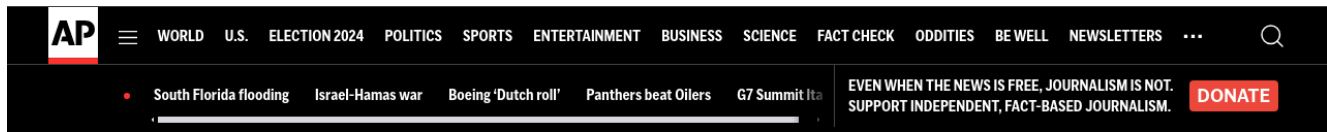
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**WILL WEISSERT**

Will is a national political reporter based in Washington.

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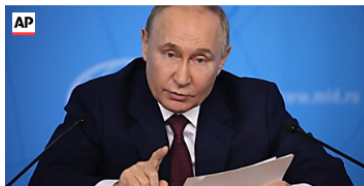
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Effects

Effects are used to customize and add details to TikTok videos. Effects can be added before or after you record a video, but some are only available before recording and others are only available after.

For more editing options, go to our article on [enhanced editing tools on TikTok](#).

To record with an effect:

1. In the TikTok app, tap the **Add Post +** button at the bottom.
2. Tap **Effects** at the bottom of the camera screen.
3. Select an effect to preview. It'll automatically be applied to your screen.
4. Tap anywhere to return to the camera screen and record with the effect.

You can also add effects to your Favorites to find them later.

To add an effect to your Favorites:

1. After tapping the **Add Post +** button, tap **Effects** and select the effect you would like to favorite.
2. Tap the **Favorites** button at the top of the effects panel.

The effect will now appear in your Favorites. To remove an effect from Favorites, go to the effect and tap the **Favorites** button.

Filters

To add a filter to your video:

1. In the TikTok app, tap the **Add Post +** button at the bottom.
2. Tap **Filters** on the side panel.
3. Select a filter you'd like to use. You can add a filter before and after recording or uploading your video.
4. Adjust the slider above the filters panel to preview different filter strengths.
5. Tap anywhere to return to the camera screen and record with the filter.

Select **Management** from the filters panel to choose which filters you'd like to see appear in the app.

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A TikTok ban could also end short-form video as we've come to know it

ByteDance's CapCut editing app made it easy to edit short-form video. The legislation that could ban TikTok also applies to CapCut, congressional aides say.




By [Taylor Lorenz](#)

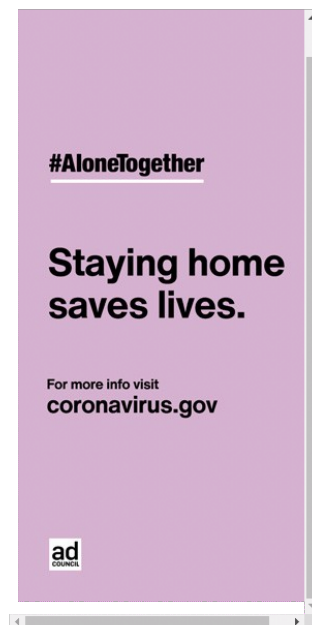
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(Nikolas Kokovlis/NurPhoto/Getty Images)

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With the passage of the bill that could effectively ban TikTok, ByteDance's other major product, the short-form video editor CapCut, is in jeopardy.



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With the passage of the bill that could effectively ban TikTok, ByteDance's other major product, the short-form video editor CapCut, is in jeopardy.

Multiple House aides familiar with the bill confirmed to The Washington Post that it is their understanding that CapCut would be subject to the same divest-or-ban requirement as TikTok.

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That, in turn, could lead to the collapse of the entire short-form video ecosystem, say creators, users and experts. With short-form video becoming the primary way young people express themselves online, a ban of CapCut would stifle self expression for millions of young people, the experts and creators note.

TikTok's possible ban



(Kiichiro Sato/AP)

The popular app TikTok is preparing to fight for its life in court after President Biden signed a law calling for its forced sale or ban in the United States. See how a potential ban might affect users and when the TikTok ban could take affect.

Since relaunching in the United States in 2018, TikTok has transformed the video landscape. Before then, most video content was produced in a horizontal or square format. TikTok mainstreamed fast-paced, hyper-edited, short-form vertical video. As TikTok soared in popularity, short-form video became the dominant form of expression for millions of content creators and young users across the internet. TikTok-like short-form video features were integrated into Instagram with Reels and on YouTube with YouTube Shorts. Even Netflix and LinkedIn have rolled out short-form, vertical content in their algorithmic recommendation feeds.



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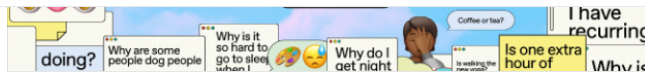


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Producing this content, however, is nearly impossible for the average user without the suite of editing tools in TikTok's sister video editing app, CapCut. While video editing apps and platforms existed before ByteDance introduced CapCut in April 2020, most were clunky, poorly designed or aimed at a more professional audience, such as Adobe Premiere.

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CapCut changed all that.

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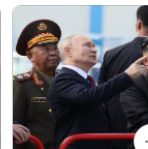
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The app allows any user, regardless of whether they have a TikTok account, to easily create incredibly complex and engaging videos on their phone. It makes editing tasks that previously would have taken hours of arduous work and technical know how as easy as clicking a button or two. That's made CapCut an essential tool for small businesses, educators, content creators and anyone looking to create internet-native video.

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“CapCut is the foundation for all the short-form vertical video on the internet,” said Brendan Gahan, CEO and co-founder of Creator Authority, an influencer marketing agency in Southern California. “People start on CapCut, then post on YouTube Shorts, Instagram, everywhere.”

Sam Griffin-Ortiz, a video editor and multimedia artist in Oakland, Calif., said he would liken CapCut’s impact on social media “to the impact of the electric guitar on music in the 20th century.”

Videos created on TikTok and CapCut are “their own language,” said Nathan Preston, who operates the meme account @Northwest_MCM_Wholesale on Instagram. Preston, like many Instagram creators, leverages CapCut and TikTok’s suite of creative editing tools to make his videos, which he then posts to other platforms.

“I’m a trained design professional,” he said. “I have Adobe Premiere, I know how to use Final Cut and all that stuff. CapCut is easier, more intuitive. We’re losing something if it goes away. If it goes away, it will make me less inclined to make whatever the hell I make.”

CapCut has become so synonymous with online videos that its pre-formatted video templates frequently trend across other platforms, such as Instagram Reels. “Ninety percent of the Reels I see on Instagram I can tell the exact CapCut pro template they’ve used,” said Griffin-Ortiz.



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Michael Wong, the founder of @AsianVerified, a humor media company that operates on Instagram and YouTube, said that CapCut is essential to making content that performs well online. “It’s a specific style,” he said. “You’ll see ads on Reddit and all over made to mimic the CapCut look.”

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operates on Instagram and YouTube, said that CapCut is essential to making content that performs well online. “It’s a specific style,” he said. “You’ll see ads on Reddit and all over made to mimic the CapCut look.”

No other major social media platform offers the same suite of creative tools that CapCut does, creators said. Creating captions, on-screen animations and visual effects are all as easy as clicking a button or two on CapCut; re-creating those same effects in Adobe Premiere or After Effects (other editing platforms) would take hours.

“If you make something natively on Instagram it looks cheugy,” said Wong, using the internet slang term to mean corny and passé.

Lauren Moore, the founder and creator of Book Huddle, an online book community, said content created in CapCut consistently outperforms content made using other programs. The tools the platform offers automatically make nearly any piece of content more engaging, she explained.

“Most video editing tools require you to have all the assets and a vision in mind; you’re really starting with a blank slate,” she said. “With CapCut, it takes you about three steps ahead from that blank slate. You don’t have to be a knowledgeable video editor to be able to create really effective viral content.”

That viral content performs particularly well outside the ByteDance ecosystem. The style of editing pioneered by MrBeast, called “retention editing,” was birthed from CapCut.

“Everyone’s using the same basic tools,” Noah Kettle, co-founder of Moke Media Co., a video editing and social media monetization consultancy, told The Post last month. “I’ve seen 10 to 15 creators use the exact same animated money-on-screen effect, and it’s all from CapCut.”

CapCut users are scrambling since news of the potential TikTok ban broke. Some said they were worried they wouldn’t be able to continue to make videos without access to CapCut.

“There’s a unique form of artistry that CapCut enables,” said Moore. “Social media is all about connection, and a really big part of connecting with other people is creating content that elicits an emotional reaction or shows an emotional side of yourself. By using cap cuts tools, you can quickly and easily create a video to demonstrate what’s on your mind, or how you’re feeling about things, and that is going to be so much harder to do if we don’t have CapCut at our disposal.”

Many creators spoke about the potential removal of these creative tools as if there were suddenly a ban on language. They said that while older people seem



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Many creators spoke about the potential removal of these creative tools as if there were suddenly a ban on language. They said that while older people seem to harbor a hostility toward short form, highly edited video, it has become an essential mode of expression.

“It’s like you’re taking away a language from people,” said Griffin-Ortiz. “Banning CapCut would be the book burning of the digital age. I think we’ll look back on this time and history and see it in a lens very similar to book burnings.”

Creators who are immersed in the short form online video world said that reverting to previous tools would feel like a step back.

“CapCut has transformed the way a lot of content creators create video online,” said Connor Clary, a Gen Z content creator and potter in Kansas City, Mo. “Before CapCut existed, short-form video was a lot simpler. It was a lot of basic, one take videos. CapCut elevated vertical video.”

Len Necefer, who runs the Instagram account @sonoran.avalanche.center aimed at raising awareness around the climate crisis, said that CapCut is a crucial tool when it comes to creating pieces of media that feel native to young people. “CapCut allows me to craft videos and messaging in a style that reaches Gen Z voters,” he said. “We’ve been doing voter outreach and turning out the vote, and that’s where we’ve used CapCut the most. It allows us to target the younger audience in a more playful way.”

While TikTok is the law’s main focus, the terms of the legislation are written to apply to any app that qualifies as a “foreign adversary controlled application.” The law defines a foreign adversary controlled application as any app that’s operated by ByteDance, TikTok, or a subsidiary of either of the two — which would presumably include CapCut.

CapCut has so far received relatively little mention in the debate surrounding the TikTok ban. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), one of the bill’s architects, did mention it twice in her opening statements at a March hearing of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, claiming that CapCut is subject to the influence of the Chinese Communist Party, though she provided no evidence to support her claims.

Gahan said the TikTok ban is drastic, but cutting off CapCut could have just as far-reaching impact on the online landscape.

If a CapCut ban were to pass alongside TikTok, “there’s a mode of self expression that’s going to be disappearing from the internet,” he said.



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If a CapCut ban were to pass alongside TikTok, "there's a mode of self expression that's going to be disappearing from the internet," he said.

Possible TikTok ban

President Biden announced he has signed legislation to ban or force a sale of TikTok after Congress passed legislation to ban or force a sale of TikTok, delivering a historic rebuke of the video-sharing platform's Chinese ownership.

What the bill does: The bill, which saw bipartisan support in the House and Senate, would require the social media app's Chinese parent company, ByteDance, to sell off the immensely popular app or face a nationwide ban. Here's what you should know about the potential ban.

What's next: The provision gives ByteDance roughly nine months to sell the wildly popular app or face a national ban, a deadline Biden could extend the deadline by 90 days. TikTok is expected to challenge the measure, setting up a high-stakes and

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By [Taylor Lorenz](#)

Taylor Lorenz is a columnist at The Washington Post covering technology and online culture. Before joining The Post, she was a technology reporter for the New York Times. Previously, she was a technology reporter at the Atlantic and the Daily Beast.

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How TikTok recommends videos #ForYou

TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy. We're building a global community where you can create and share authentically, discover the world, and connect with others. The For You feed is part of what enables that connection and discovery. It's central to the TikTok experience and where most of our users spend their time.

When you open TikTok and land in your For You feed, you're presented with a stream of videos curated to your interests, making it easy to find content and creators you love. This feed is powered by a recommendation system that delivers content to each user that is likely to be of interest to that particular user. Part of the magic of TikTok is that there's no one For You feed – while different people may come upon some of the same standout videos, each person's feed is unique and tailored to that specific individual.

The For You feed is one of the defining features of the TikTok platform, but we know there are questions about how recommendations are delivered to your feed. In this post we'll explain the recommendation system behind the For You feed, discuss how we work to counter some of the issues that all recommendation services can grapple with, and share tips for how you can personalize your discovery experience on TikTok.

The basics about recommendation systems

Recommendation systems are all around us. They power many of the services we use and love every day. From shopping to streaming to search engines, recommendation systems are designed to help people have a more personalized experience.

In general, these systems suggest content after taking into account user preferences as expressed through interactions with the app, like posting a comment or following an account. These signals help the recommendation system gauge the content you like as well as the content you'd prefer to skip.

What factors contribute to For You?

On TikTok, the For You feed reflects preferences unique to each user. The system recommends content by ranking videos based on a combination of factors – starting from interests you express as a new user and adjusting for things you indicate you're *not* interested in, too – to form your personalized For You feed.

Recommendations are based on a number of factors, including things like:

- **User interactions** such as the videos you like or share, accounts you follow, comments you post, and content you create.
- **Video information**, which might include details like captions, sounds, and hashtags.
- **Device and account settings** like your language preference, country setting, and device type. These factors are included to make sure the system is optimized for performance, but they receive lower weight in the recommendation system relative to other data points we measure since users don't actively express these as preferences.

All these factors are processed by our recommendation system and weighted based on



device type. These factors are included to make sure the system is optimized for performance, but they receive lower weight in the recommendation system relative to other data points we measure since users don't actively express these as preferences.

All these factors are processed by our recommendation system and weighted based on their value to a user. A strong indicator of interest, such as whether a user finishes watching a longer video from beginning to end, would receive greater weight than a weak indicator, such as whether the video's viewer and creator are both in the same country. Videos are then ranked to determine the likelihood of a user's interest in a piece of content, and delivered to each unique For You feed.

While a video is likely to receive more views if posted by an account that has more followers, by virtue of that account having built up a larger follower base, neither follower count nor whether the account has had previous high-performing videos are direct factors in the recommendation system.

Curating your personalized For You feed

Getting started

How can you possibly know what you like on TikTok when you've only just started on the app? To help kick things off we invite new users to select categories of interest, like pets or travel, to help tailor recommendations to their preferences. This allows the app to develop an initial feed, and it will start to polish recommendations based on your interactions with an early set of videos.

For users who don't select categories, we start by offering you a generalized feed of popular videos to get the ball rolling. Your first set of likes, comments, and replays will initiate an early round of recommendations as the system begins to learn more about your content tastes.

Finding more of what you're interested in

Every new interaction helps the system learn about your interests and suggest content – so the best way to curate your For You feed is to simply use and enjoy the app. Over time, your For You feed should increasingly be able to surface recommendations that are relevant to your interests.

Your For You feed isn't only shaped by your engagement through the feed itself. When you decide to follow new accounts, for example, that action will help refine your recommendations too, as will exploring hashtags, sounds, effects, and trending topics on the Discover tab. All of these are ways to tailor your experience and invite new categories of content into your feed.

Seeing less of what you're not interested in

TikTok is home to creators with many different interests and perspectives, and sometimes you may come across a video that isn't quite to your taste. Just like you can long-press to add a video to your favorites, you can simply long-press on a video and tap "Not Interested" to indicate that you don't care for a particular video. You can also choose to hide videos from a given creator or made with a certain sound, or report a video that seems out of line with our guidelines. All these actions contribute to future recommendations in your For You feed.

Addressing the challenges of recommendation engines

One of the inherent challenges with recommendation engines is that they can inadvertently limit your experience – what is sometimes referred to as a "filter bubble." By optimizing for personalization and relevance, there is a risk of presenting an increasingly homogenous stream of videos. This is a concern we take seriously as we maintain our recommendation system.

Interrupting repetitive patterns

To keep your For You feed interesting and varied, our recommendation system works to





By optimizing for personalization and relevance, there is a risk of presenting an increasingly homogenous stream of videos. This is a concern we take seriously as we maintain our recommendation system.

Interrupting repetitive patterns

To keep your For You feed interesting and varied, our recommendation system works to intersperse diverse types of content along with those you already know you love. For example, your For You feed generally won't show two videos in a row made with the same sound or by the same creator. We also don't recommend duplicated content, content you've already seen before, or any content that's considered spam. However, you might be recommended a video that's been well received by other users who share similar interests.

Diversifying recommendations

Diversity is essential to maintaining a thriving global community, and it brings the many corners of TikTok closer together. To that end, sometimes you may come across a video in your feed that doesn't appear to be relevant to your expressed interests or have amassed a huge number of likes. This is an important and intentional component of our approach to recommendation: bringing a diversity of videos into your For You feed gives you additional opportunities to stumble upon new content categories, discover new creators, and experience new perspectives and ideas as you scroll through your feed.

By offering different videos from time to time, the system is also able to get a better sense of what's popular among a wider range of audiences to help provide other TikTok users a great experience, too. Our goal is to find balance between suggesting content that's relevant to you while also helping you find content and creators that encourage you to explore experiences you might not otherwise see.

Safeguarding the viewing experience

Our recommendation system is also designed with safety as a consideration. Reviewed content found to depict things like graphic medical procedures or legal consumption of regulated goods, for example – which may be shocking if surfaced as a recommended video to a general audience that hasn't opted in to such content – may not be eligible for recommendation. Similarly, videos that have just been uploaded or are under review, and spam content such as videos seeking to artificially increase traffic, also may be ineligible for recommendation into anyone's For You feed.

Improving For You

Developing and maintaining TikTok's recommendation system is a continuous process as we work to refine accuracy, adjust models, and reassess the factors and weights that contribute to recommendations based on feedback from users, research, and data. We are committed to further research and investment as we work to build in even more protections against the engagement bias that can affect any recommendation system.

This work spans many teams – including product, safety, and security – whose work helps improve the relevance of the recommendation system and its accuracy in suggesting content and categories you're more likely to enjoy.

Ultimately, your For You feed is powered by your feedback: the system is designed to continuously improve, correct, and learn from your own engagement with the platform to produce personalized recommendations that we hope inspire creativity and bring joy with every refresh of your For You feed.

Note: At the [TikTok Transparency Center](#) in Los Angeles, invited experts will have the opportunity to learn how our algorithm operates along with reviewing TikTok source code, which will be made available at the center for testing and evaluation.

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Jun 18, 2024





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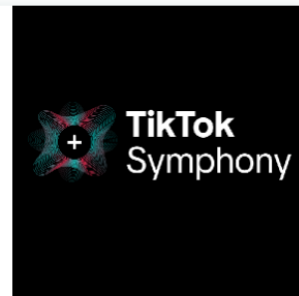


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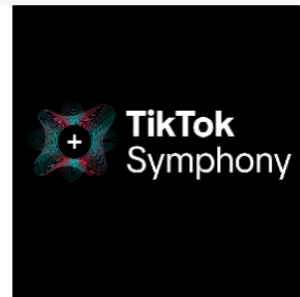


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How TikTok recommends content

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[What are recommender systems?](#) • [How content is recommended across TikTok](#) • [Other factors that influence how TikTok recommends content](#) • [How you can influence what you see on TikTok](#)

What are recommender systems?

TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy. We have a wide variety of content and we want you to discover interesting and relevant videos. That's why we use recommender systems to offer you a personalized experience. These systems suggest content based on your preferences as expressed through interactions on TikTok, such as following an account or liking a post.

When you first sign up for TikTok, we may invite you to select categories of interest, like pets or travel, which help us form your For You and LIVE feeds. If you don't select any categories of interest, we start by offering you a feed of recent videos that are popular with others on TikTok. When selecting your initial set of videos, the recommender system looks for popular videos that are appropriate for a broad audience and influenced by your location and language settings. In addition to categories, we'll suggest popular creators for you to follow. If you don't select any followers or have any friends on TikTok, then you may not see content in your Friends Tab or Following feed.

Once you start interacting on the app, your interactions act as signals that help the recommender system predict content you're more likely to be interested in as well as the content you might be less interested in and may prefer to skip. Your interactions across TikTok can impact how the system ranks and serves you content.

How content is recommended across TikTok

We recommend content based on several factors to predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a user. The three main factors are user interactions, content information, and user information.

Each recommender system selects from a large collection of eligible content and ranks them based on the system's prediction of how likely you'll be interested in each one. In certain recommender systems, these predictions are also influenced by the interactions of other people on TikTok who appear to have similar interests. For example, if User A likes videos 1, 2, and 3 and User B likes videos 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, the recommender system may predict User A will also like videos 4 and 5. While some may see the same content, features like the For You, Following, Friends, and LIVE feeds are unique to each person.

You can view content through several feeds and features, which we continually improve and expand over time. Below, we've provided some popular examples.



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You can view content through several feeds and features, which we continually improve and expand over time. Below, we've provided some popular examples.

For You

The For You feed displays a stream of content just for you, so you can find content and creators you love.

Factors that may influence your For You feed include:

- **User interactions:** Content you like, share, comment on, and watch in full or skip, as well as accounts of followers that you follow back.
- **Content information:** Sounds, hashtags, number of views, and the country the content was published.
- **User information:** Device settings, language preference, location, time zone and day, and device type.

These factors help us predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a user. Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the time spent watching a specific video is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Following

The Following feed displays content from creators you follow. Each Following feed is unique—even when two users follow the same set of creators, each feed will rank and serve content in a way that is tailored to how you use TikTok.

Factors that may influence your Following feed include:

- **User interactions:** Visits to the user profiles you follow and the content you like, share, comment on, and watch in full or skip.
- **Content information:** Sounds, hashtags, number of video views, and the country the content was published.
- **User information:** Device settings, language preference, location, time zone and day, and device type.

These factors help us predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a user. Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the time spent watching specific videos is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Friends

The Friends Tab displays content from followers that you follow back (your friends), accounts you follow, and other [suggested accounts](#). Even when two users follow the same set of creators, their Friends Tab will rank and serve content in a way that is unique to each person.

Factors that may influence the Friends Tab include:

- **User interactions:** Visits to the profiles of your friends or people you may know and the content you like, share, comment on, and watch in full or skip.
- **Content information:** Sounds, hashtags, number of video views, and the country the content was published.
- **User information:** Device settings, contacts (with your permission), language preference, location, time zone and day, and device type.

These factors help us predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a viewer. Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, likes and comments on a video are generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

LIVE





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LIVE

The LIVE feed displays a stream of LIVE videos that allows you to find content and creators you love. You can view LIVE videos by selecting the LIVE button at the top of the For You feed, or you may see recommended LIVE videos in your For You Feed.

Factors that may influence your LIVE feed include:

- **User interactions:** LIVE videos you like and comment on, creators you follow, watch time, and Gifts sent.
- **Content information:** Hashtags, number of LIVE views, number of likes, number of Gifts sent, number of followers of that creator, and the country in which the LIVE is taking place.
- **User information:** Device settings, language preference, location, time zone and day, and device type.

These factors help us predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a user. Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the time spent watching a specific LIVE is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Search

Our search feature allows you to search for content on TikTok. It also recommends search terms for you to discover content.

Factors that may influence your search results include:

- **User interactions:** Your past search behavior and the content you like, share, comment on, and watch in full or skip.
- **Content information:** How relevant the content is to your search, hashtags, and the sound used.
- **User information:** Device settings, language preference, and location.

These factors help us predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a viewer. Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, how relevant the content is to the specific term entered is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Comments

We recommend comments on posts that we think you'll be interested in and to build connections within the TikTok community.

Factors that may influence what comments we show you:

- **User interactions:** Comments you like, reply to, and if you follow the video creator or author of the comment.
- **Content information:** Number of likes and the language of the comment.
- **User information:** Your location and language preference, and device settings.

Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the language of the comment and how many likes it has are generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Notifications

We'll send you notifications to recommend content you might like, people you might know, or search terms you might be interested in.

Factors that may influence what notifications we send you:

- **User interactions:** How active you've been on TikTok and your previous interactions with notifications.
- **Content information:** Creator of the content, hashtags, number of views, and the country the





Home

Search

terms you might be interested in.

Factors that may influence what notifications we send you:

- **User interactions:** How active you've been on TikTok and your previous interactions with notifications.
- **Content information:** Creator of the content, hashtags, number of views, and the country the content was published.
- **User information:** Your location, language preference, and device type.

Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the number of notifications you receive and open is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Account recommendations

On TikTok, you can connect with people you may know and creators that might interest you, based on who you're already engaging with.

Factors that may influence your account recommendations include:

- **User interactions:** Your activity on TikTok, such as the types of accounts you follow, like, or share content with.
- **Content information:** Number of followers and views an account has, account location, and the likelihood that you know another user, for example if they're in your contacts (with your permission).
- **User information:** Device settings, language preference, and location.

Different factors can play a larger or smaller role in what's recommended, and the importance—or weighting—of a factor can change over time. For many users, the number of mutual connections between two accounts is generally weighted more heavily than other factors.

Other factors that influence how TikTok recommends content

Diversifying recommendations

When you view content in your Friends Tab, For You, Following, and LIVE feeds, our goal is to find a balance between suggesting content that's relevant to you while also allowing you to discover new and diverse content and creators, and experience new perspectives and ideas. That's why you may come across content in your For You and LIVE feeds that doesn't appear to be relevant to your expressed interests. We typically don't recommend content you've already seen and we'll encourage you to explore different categories of content and creators through recommendations.

Similarly with your Friends Tab and Following feed, you may see multiple videos from the same creator, but we generally won't recommend two videos in a row from that creator. If you follow only them, then we may recommend multiple videos in a row. If you run out of videos to watch on your Friends Tab or Following feed, then we'll suggest for you to explore videos on your For You feed.

Safeguarding your experience

Our recommender systems are designed with safety as a key consideration and we remove any content identified as violating our [Community Guidelines](#).

Our safety team takes additional precautions to review content as they rise in popularity to reduce the likelihood of recommending content that may not be suitable for everyone on TikTok. For example, we strive to not recommend—or to limit the recommendation of—certain categories of content that may not be suitable for a general audience, even if that content is not removed from TikTok altogether. [We continually review LIVE videos](#) to interrupt and stop LIVE content that violates our Community Guidelines. We may also restrict creators from going LIVE who violate our Community Guidelines. Users under the age of 18 are not permitted to host a LIVE or to send Gifts, and are restricted from watching certain LIVE videos. Learn more about [age-restricted content on LIVE](#).

You can learn more about our standards on content eligibility in our [Community Guidelines](#).





Home

Search

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You can learn more about our standards on content eligibility in our [Community Guidelines](#).

How you can influence what you see on TikTok

For You

In addition to selecting categories of interest when you sign up for TikTok, you can use the following features to help shape your For You feed:

- [Not interested](#): If you don't enjoy a specific piece of content you can let us know by sharing feedback that you're not interested in and we'll show you fewer content like it.
- [Filter video keywords](#): Filter out specific words or hashtags from the content recommended to you in your For You and Following feeds.

If the recommendations on your For You feed don't feel relevant to you anymore, or you're looking for more variety in your feed, you can [refresh your For You feed](#) to view a new set of popular content, as if you've just signed up for TikTok.

Following

Use the following features to help shape your following feed:

- [Unfollow](#): Unfollowing a creator can directly remove the creator's posts in the Following feed.
- [Filter video keywords](#): Filter out specific words or hashtags from the content preferences section in your settings to stop seeing content with those keywords in your For You and Following feeds.

Friends

Use the following features to help shape your Friends Tab:

- [Unfollow](#): Unfollowing the creator or friend could remove the posts from that account in the Friends Tab.
- [Not interested](#): If you don't enjoy recommended content from people you may know based on suggested accounts, you can let us know by sharing feedback that you're not interested and we'll show you fewer content from that creator.

LIVE

In addition to selecting categories of interest when you sign up for TikTok, you can use the following features to help shape your LIVE feed:

- [Not interested](#): If you don't enjoy a specific piece of LIVE content, you can let us know by sharing feedback that you're not interested and we'll show you fewer content from that creator.

Comments

Let us know if you're not interested in a comment by disliking it within the comments section of a post.

Notifications

[Manage notifications](#) in your settings to choose what type of notifications you'd like to receive for suggested posts. Turn all notifications off or choose which interactions you'd like to receive notifications for.

Account recommendations

Use the following features to help shape your account recommendations:

- [Unsync your contacts](#): Remove previously synced contacts or turn off synced contacts in your privacy settings.
- Remove suggested accounts: When we recommend accounts for you to follow, you can remove it from the suggested list to let us know you're not interested.





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Search

features to help shape your LIVE feed:

- [Not interested](#): If you don't enjoy a specific piece of LIVE content, you can let us know by sharing feedback that you're not interested and we'll show you fewer content from that creator.

Comments

Let us know if you're not interested in a comment by disliking it within the comments section of a post.

Notifications

[Manage notifications](#) in your settings to choose what type of notifications you'd like to receive for suggested posts. Turn all notifications off or choose which interactions you'd like to receive notifications for.

Account recommendations

Use the following features to help shape your account recommendations:

- [Unsync your contacts](#): Remove previously synced contacts or turn off synced contacts in your privacy settings.
- Remove suggested accounts: When we recommend accounts for you to follow, you can remove it from the suggested list to let us know you're not interested.

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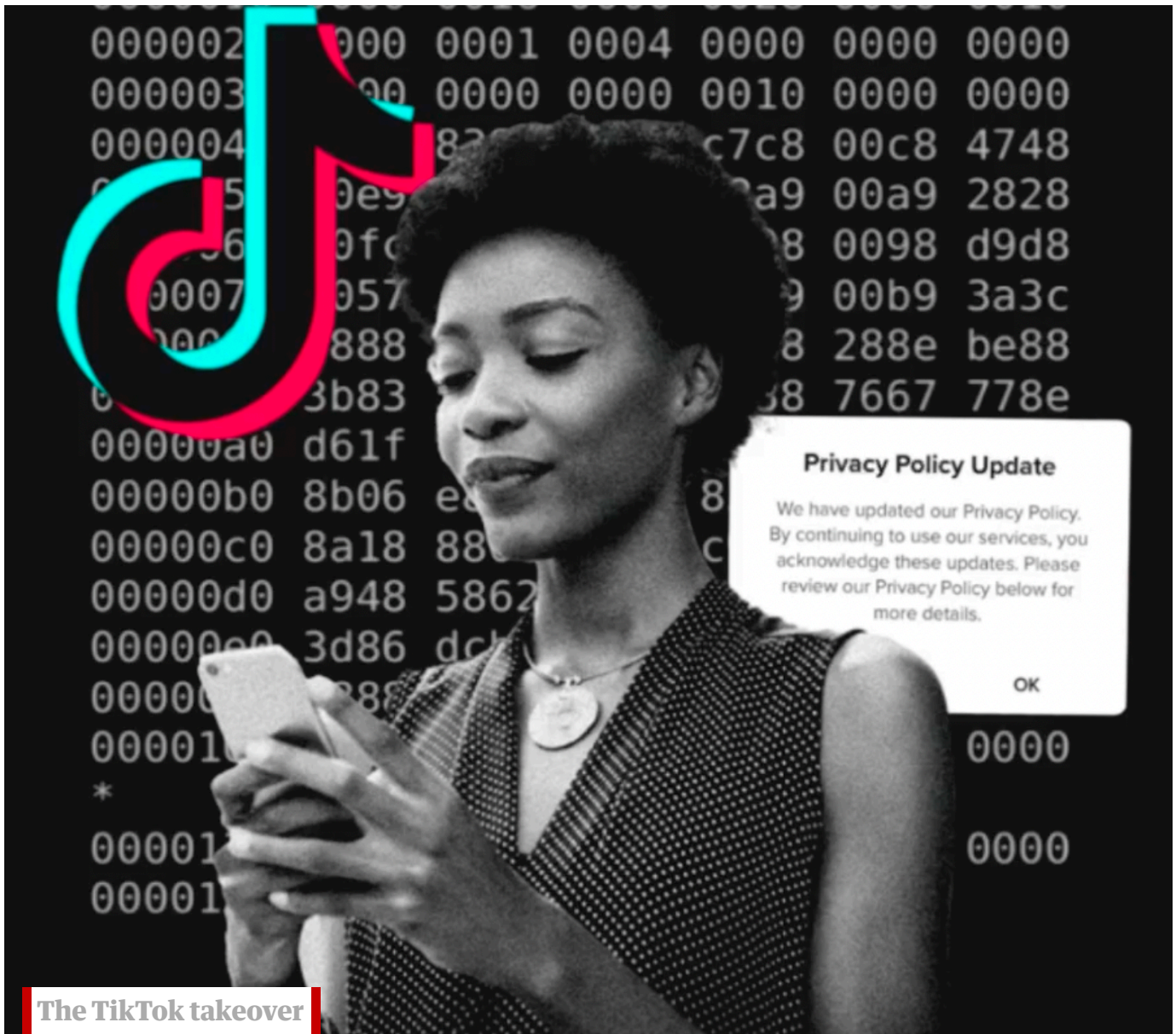
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EXHIBIT 14

[News](#) [Opinion](#) [Sport](#) [Culture](#) [Lifestyle](#)**The TikTok takeover** This article is more than **1 year old**

How TikTok's algorithm made it a success: 'It pushes the boundaries'

The company's secret sauce is what populates its For You Page, which predicts the videos that will pique a viewer's interest

Read the new Guardian series exploring the increasing power and reach of TikTok

By Alex Hern

Mon 24 Oct 2022 01:00 EDT

It is, quite literally, the trillion dollar question: how did TikTok go from a niche social network for lip-syncing teens to the most popular app in the western world, threatening to knock **Facebook** off its perch entirely, in just a few short years?

There are no end of possible answers, and **TikTok** owes its phenomenal success to a host of canny choices: easy-to-use video creation tools blurred the line between creator and consumer far more than YouTube had ever managed; a vast library of licensed music allowed teens to soundtrack their clips without fear of copyright strikes; a billion-dollar advertising campaign across Facebook and Instagram bought new users as quickly as Zuckerberg's company would send them over.

But the most powerful tool TikTok has to grab users and keep them hooked is the company's feted "For You Page", the FYP, and the algorithm that populates it.



TikTok's For You Page has the ability to grab users and keep them hooked. Photograph: Martin Meissner/AP

The FYP is the default screen new users see when opening the app. Even if you don't follow a single other account, you'll find it immediately populated with a never-ending stream of short clips culled from what's popular across the service. That decision already gave the company a leg up compared to the competition: a Facebook or Twitter account with no friends or followers is a lonely, barren place, but TikTok is engaging from day one.

It's what happens next that is the company's secret sauce, though. As you scroll through the FYP, the makeup of videos you're presented with slowly begins to change, until, the app's regular users say, it becomes almost uncannily good at predicting what videos from around the site are going to pique your interest.

The company is disarmingly open about how that algorithm works - at least, on the surface. "Recommendations are based on a number of factors," [it said in 2020](#), "including things like user interactions such as the videos you like or share, accounts you follow, comments you post, and content you create; video information, which might include details like captions, sounds, and hashtags; [and] device and account settings like your language preference, country setting, and device type."

But how those various inputs are weighted, and what precise factors lead any particular video to end up on your feed, is opaque, says Chris Stokel-Walker, author of *TikTok Boom*. "One person at TikTok in charge of trying to track

what goes viral and why told me in my book that ‘There’s no recipe for it, there’s no magic formula.’ The employee even admitted that ‘It’s a question I don’t think even the algo team have the answer to. It’s just so sophisticated.’”

One crucial innovation is that, unlike older recommendation algorithms, TikTok doesn’t just wait for the user to indicate that they like a video with a thumbs up, or satisfy itself by judging what a user chooses to view. Instead, it appears to actively test its own predictions, experimenting by showing videos that it thinks might be enjoyable and gauging the response. “It pushes the boundaries of your interests and monitors how you engage with those new videos it seeds in your For You Page,” Stokel-Walker says. “If it thinks you like videos about Formula One, it might show you some videos about supercars.”



TikTok creators, such as Gabby Murray, in Palm Beach, Florida, had amassed 8.5 million followers in 2021. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

That experimentation doesn’t just allow the service to rapidly discern the contours of an individual viewer’s interests, it’s also an important part of what the site offers creators, says Sascha Morgan-Evans, head of the TikTok studio at creative agency OK COOL. “Every video posted on TikTok gets served to at least one person on the For You Page. We’ve figured out, based on how views accumulate, that TikTok serves each individual video to batches of people. The number of users in these batches increases with each

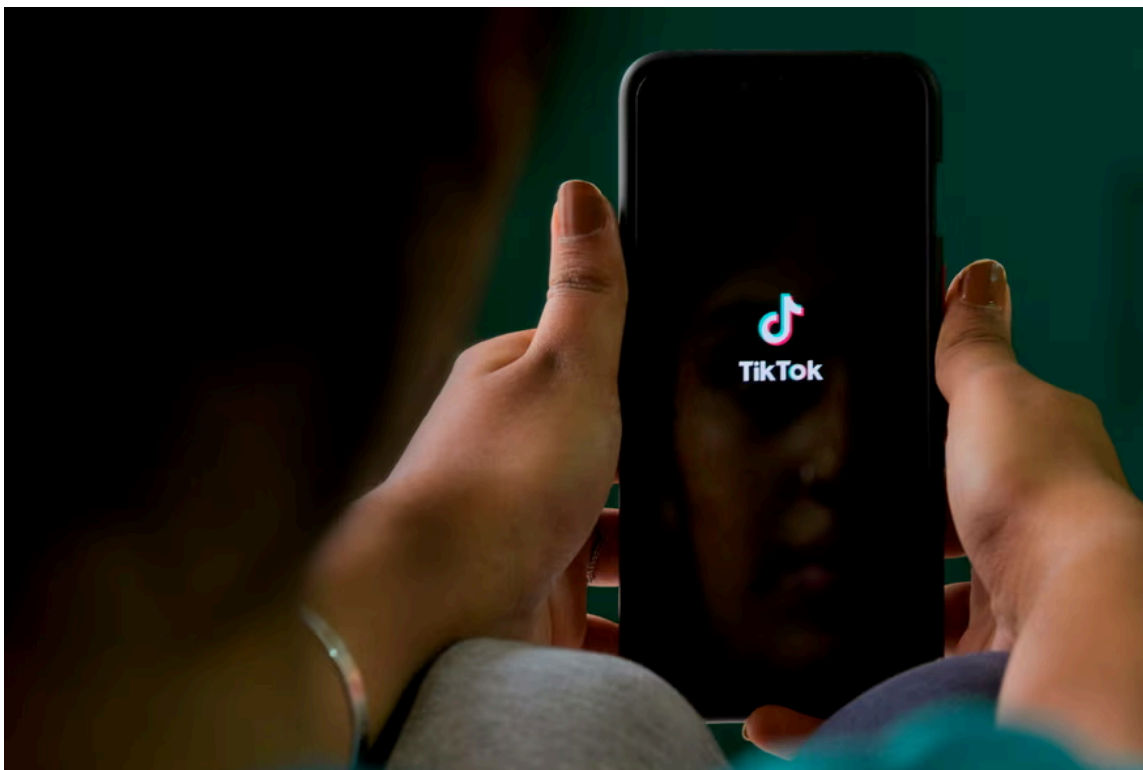
successful round, one where a majority of users within a batch had a high number of positive interactions with the video.”

That means that every user has the chance of global fame. Even if you have no followers at all, your video will eventually make it on to someone’s For You Page, and if they are deemed to have engaged positively, you can reach thousands or millions of viewers extremely quickly. And the speed of the videos helps TikTok hone its data rapidly: “Think about how many videos you watch in an hour on YouTube,” Stokel-Walker says, “and the data that generates about you - versus how many you can watch on TikTok.”

The FYP isn’t magic, though, and the ways it fails can be just as instructive as the ways it succeeds. New users of the app will notice that it is obsessive about harvesting personal data, begging for access to the contacts list and tracking every inbound and outbound shared video. Deny it those datapoints, and it is forced to present the most generic possible version of the feed, personalised to what little it can determine from broad geolocation and device details.

But when it works, the algorithm is so good at what it sets out to do that TikTok appears almost overwhelmed by its power, Stokel-Walker says. “It’s even slipped in messages to users it thinks are too addicted, saying they should put the phone down.”

One such message, shown from the company’s TikTokTips account to users scrolling through their feed for hours straight late at night, features TikTok star Gabe Erwin imploring the viewer to “go get some extra sleep, turn your phone off, do yourself that favour and have a great night”. The company has also added new “screen time” features, particularly for younger users, turning off notifications past bedtime and allowing users to set a maximum time on the app each day, in an effort to limit the most compulsive use of its app.



TikTok has added features that allow users to limit compulsive use of its app. Photograph: Manjunath Kiran/AFP/Getty Images

As TikTok moves into its second year of online dominance - the app overtook YouTube for average time per user in September 2021 and has stayed at the top ever since - the big question is whether its algorithmic success can remain a unique selling point. Facebook certainly hopes not: the social network, along with corporate sibling Instagram, recently announced an overhaul of its apps to focus on an aggressive new algorithmic curation engine. Just like TikTok, Facebook and Instagram will now show you vast quantities of content from users you don't follow, with posts from friends buried in between, or hidden on a separate "following" feed behind a tab.

The change was **poorly received**, leading to an apology video from Instagram boss Adam Mosseri, who said the company would be dialing back some of the alterations - but that ultimately, this was the future. "We're going to try and get better at recommendations," he said, "because we think it's one of the best ways to help creators reach a new audience and grow their following."

If there is a threat to TikTok's algorithmic crown, it might be from the company itself. The app dominates user attention, but has historically been lightly monetised. As a privately held company, TikTok doesn't publish

revenue figures but in 2021, research firm eMarketer estimates it took in \$4bn a year - less than 5% of Facebook's revenue.

In 2022, the company has tried to grow that. It's taken the traditional approach, with more adverts injected into the feed, but also tried more novel opportunities, including a push for QVC-style live shopping experiences, lifted from Chinese sister app Douyin. The launch went poorly. Hosts and brands had to be subsidised by TikTok, which pushed deep discounts in sales but failed to garner a regular returning audience.

Worse, sales with too-good-to-be-true prices were undercut by other items whose prices really were too good to be true: the platform struggled with a counterfeiting problem, leaving users unclear if a Dyson hairdryer worth £450 is selling for £14 because of a subsidy or a scam.

But if TikTok can work out how to balance the commercially-necessary tweaks to its algorithm with the pure compulsion of the FYP at its best (or worst), then it will have created an artefact of tech history that will go down alongside the News Feed, Infinite Scroll and (Snapchat) Story as emblematic of the social media era.

EXHIBIT 15

How TikTok Changed the Social Media Game With Its Unique Algorithm

Here's what makes TikTok's algorithm different from other social media platforms and how the algorithm led to the app's explosive growth.

BY [AJ KUMAR](#) EDITED BY [CHELSEA BROWN](#) AUG 16, 2022

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TikTok is rewriting the rules for how we create, share and discover visual content. The [TikTok algorithm](#), specifically the "For You Page" (FYP) feed, has changed the game for social networks propelling entertainment and discovery to the forefront.

In this article, I'm diving into the rise and fall of social media, what led to TikTok's explosive growth, how the TikTok algorithm is different from other social networks, and how TikTok's success is influencing other platforms.

Related: [How Brands Are Capitalizing TikTok to Win New Audiences](#)

The rise and fall of social media

As [social networks](#) and media platforms evolve, so do our habits and behaviors. Think back to your early social media days. Before the explosive growth of apps like TikTok and Instagram, our social media experiences and the content we consumed were largely

The rise and fall of social media

As [social networks](#) and media platforms evolve, so do our habits and behaviors. Think back to your early social media days. Before the explosive growth of apps like TikTok and Instagram, our social media experiences and the content we consumed were largely dependent on those we chose to "friend" on Facebook (and before that, MySpace).

These connections were bi-directional with both parties accepting the friendship. Initially, this was with classmates and friends. Later, our connections evolved to include extended family (remember the first time you saw Grandma was on Facebook?) and random acquaintances (that friend you met on the bus while traveling abroad). Naturally, we age out of those connections, and eventually, their content no longer feels as relevant or interesting to us.

In search of a more curated experience, we seek out new platforms. For many, this was Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn. The differentiator is the ability to one-way follow. This enabled us to tighten that circle of family and friends to just those whose posts we wanted to see.

Simultaneously, it enabled us to expand our feeds beyond those we know personally to include people and brands we were interested in following — a shift that propelled [the rise of influencers](#), creators and businesses building out their social media presence while fueling our need for more relevant content. However, it wasn't long until many of us found ourselves "doom scrolling" these apps in search of content that could keep up with our changing interests, need for entertainment and short-term attention spans.

Like many others, I found myself spending an excessive amount of time consuming information on my feeds that (again) didn't feel relevant while comparing my life to the social highlight reels of those I follow, all while absorbing negative news and feeling pressure to share and measure social interactions. This leads to an increased social and emotional burden of navigating social media, often leading to the desire to shut off the apps completely and turn to Netflix or YouTube videos for passive entertainment.

Related: [Here's Why Not Being on TikTok Is a Huge Mistake](#)

What led to TikTok's explosive growth?

Ultimately, social media platforms were built to [foster connections](#), not to discover and explore our interests. The issue is that we, as users, take on the additional burden and effort of trying to personalize our feeds to feel more relevant and interesting to us as

What led to TikTok's explosive growth?

Ultimately, social media platforms were built to [foster connections](#), not to discover and explore our interests. The issue is that we, as users, take on the additional burden and effort of trying to personalize our feeds to feel more relevant and interesting to us as individuals by muting or unfollowing, making Twitter lists, searching hashtags, typing subjects into the search bar, etc.

If only there was a platform that personalized our feeds for us without having to lift a finger ... and in the blink of an eye, TikTok completely takes the social media world by storm. After years of irrelevant, disconnected news feeds, TikTok has revamped the scrolling experience, enabling discovery and curating interest-based entertainment.

The "For You Page" (FYP) was designed to share content with users based on what the TikTok algorithm has learned to be the most relevant and of the highest interest to them. Within minutes, FYP feeds are personalized to our interests, beliefs, curiosities and passions just by passively watching entertaining [short-form videos](#).

Why is it so addicting? Because it's personalized specifically for YOU. TikTok is about discovery, and the algorithm works like a speedy matchmaker, discovering things for you that you didn't even realize you wanted to see. In 2021, TikTok surpassed Google on Cloudflare's most popular domains.

Related: [3 Reasons TikTok Is Here To Stay](#)

How is the TikTok algorithm different?

Most social media platforms, such as [Facebook and Instagram](#), rely on what is called a "social graph." They intend to connect you within a network of every person you may have any relation to and use this insight to inform advertising. However, these suggestions are under the assumption that we have the same interests and buying behaviors as those we are connected to, which is simply not the case.

TikTok's key differentiator is that the algorithm was built on an "interest graph." It works using your interests and content that you interact with, capturing your likes and dislikes and associating you with other user groups who share those interests.

TikTok does have a social graph aspect with their following feed, but the FYP is what has catapulted user discovery and creator growth. All a user has to do is watch a few videos without adding a single follower, and the TikTok algorithm can quickly curate what you will like.

ING.

How does it work? TikTok uses [artificial intelligence](#) (AI). It evolves to our changing interests in real-time without us having to do much of the work (removing that burden I mentioned earlier). The algorithm discovers what is interesting to us while we passively scroll. The short-form videos allow for this to happen at lightning speed. This removes the burden of other social apps if you want it to. You can remove the social aspect entirely. Many use TikTok solely as a discovery and entertainment platform.

AI technology is not new. You've seen it before with shopping suggestions on Amazon based on what others with similar tastes have purchased. Amazon isn't built on a social graph, so they use your past behavior and match you with those with similar [purchasing behavior](#).

The difference with TikTok is that it's hyper-personalized, and it's eerily accurate. It's so specific to your personal and professional interests that no two individuals' feeds are the same. Try it yourself — go on a friend's For You Page, and you will see the content they are matched with is entirely different from what you see on yours. At this point, TikTok may even know us better than we know ourselves.

How is TikTok's success influencing other platforms to evolve?

An essential piece to the TikTok algorithm is the focus on personalized short-form video content. This is a fundamental shift in the way people around the world engage and discover online. With short-form videos, the system receives information on our behaviors much quicker with large amounts of data in a short amount of time. They make it fun and easy for users to do the work for them while keeping us entertained along the way.

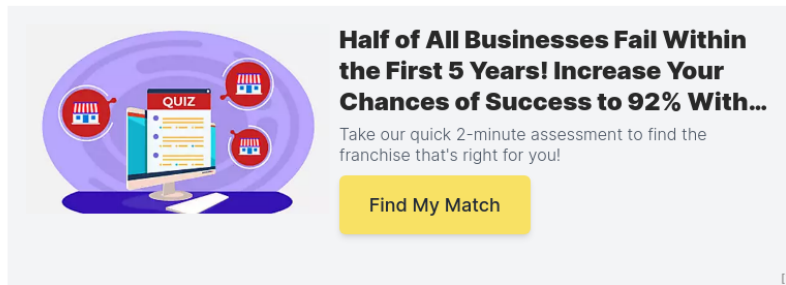
The use of short-form videos benefits all parties — users, creators and the platform itself. For users, we can consume a high dose of personalized content in a relatively short amount of time. For creators, you can get discovered more quickly while repurposing longer-form content into bite-size pieces. And for the app, short-form videos get the data they need faster, so they can personalize the [in-app experience](#) and algorithm more efficiently.

It's no surprise that the global leaders in social media are taking note. TikTok's popularity and the success of the FYP has literally propelled all the other large social platforms to build their own short-form video products (i.e., Pinterest Idea Pins, Youtube Shorts, Instagram Reels, Snapchat Spotlight, etc.) and shift their focus to prioritizing interest graphs over social graphs.

Short-form videos (and specifically, TikTok videos) are essential for any creators' [content](#)

build their own short-form video products (i.e., Pinterest Idea Pins, Youtube Shorts, Instagram Reels, Snapchat Spotlight, etc.) and shift their focus to prioritizing interest graphs over social graphs.

Short-form videos (and specifically, TikTok videos) are essential for any creators' [content strategy](#) in 2022 and beyond. Try making your own interest graph for your audience. What might they be searching for? What will make your content relevant to them? As TikTok continues to grow and other platforms follow suit, creators who are leading their niche in short-form video content will increase their discovery and grow their audience.



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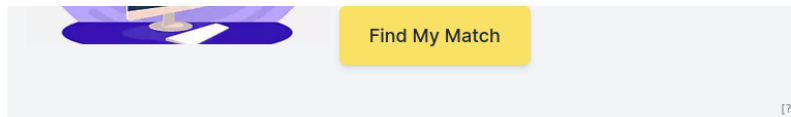
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EXHIBIT 16

TikTok Is A Beacon Of Democracy In The Social Media Landscape

James Broughel

Contributor

I am an economist focused on the economics of regulation.

Apr 19, 2024, 10:06am EDT

Updated Apr 19, 2024, 01:22pm EDT



The proposed TikTok ban in Congress fail's to recognize how the app's algorithm is more democratic ...
getty

Recent developments in the U.S. House of Representatives have put TikTok, the immensely popular Chinese-owned social media app, in the crosshairs of lawmakers. The House has tied a revised proposal to ban or force the sale of TikTok's U.S. operations to a massive \$95 billion [aid package](#) for Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza. If passed, the *Wall Street Journal* reports the the Senate could vote on the measure as early as next week, potentially fast-tracking the

Document title: TikTok Is A Beacon Of Democracy In The Social Media Landscape

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legislation. However, this move to force TikTok's parent company ByteDance to divest the app or cease operations in the U.S. would be a misguided measure that fails to recognize TikTok's unique strengths and its potential as a model for more democratic social media.

TikTok has faced scrutiny over its Chinese ownership and content algorithm, with concerns raised about [national security](#) as well as the app's [influence](#) on young users. While these concerns warrant discussion, they should not overshadow the platform's remarkable ability to democratize content creation and distribution. TikTok's algorithm is particularly effective at surfacing content from a wide range of users, regardless of their follower count or prior popularity.

In contrast, consider the recent changes at Twitter (now rebranded as X) under Elon Musk's leadership. The platform's "[blue check](#)" system systematically favors paying users, creating a two-tiered system that disadvantages those who can't or won't pay for verification. Moreover, X suffers from an incumbent advantage, where users with established followings benefit from a self-reinforcing cycle of visibility and growth, making it harder for new voices to break through.

TikTok, on the other hand, has leveled the playing field through its superior use of hashtags and its algorithm's ability to surface content based on [engagement with internet trends](#) rather than metrics indirectly tied to follower count. It's not uncommon for amateur creators with modest followings to have their videos seen by hundreds or even thousands of strangers, sparking lively discussions in the comments section. This democratization of reach is a refreshing departure from the entrenched hierarchies that can be found on other social media platforms.

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Another issue plaguing X is the prevalence of bots, which has prompted Elon Musk to propose [charging](#) new users to post in an effort to combat the “[relentless onslaught](#)” of automated accounts, he said in a recent [post](#) on the platform. While this may help mitigate the bot problem, it also erects a barrier to entry for genuine new users, further concentrating power in the hands of established accounts.

Even if the proposed ban results in TikTok’s divestiture rather than an outright shutdown, the app’s acquisition by a U.S. company—perhaps one of the Big Tech firms in Silicon Valley—could lead to a watering down of its egalitarian algorithm. American social media giants have [a history](#) of prioritizing established creators and brands over emerging or outside-the-mainstream voices, a recent *Fox Business* segment noted. There’s a risk that TikTok’s unique democratizing features could be lost in the transition.

TikTok’s triumph in fostering a more open environment for creators and users alike should be celebrated and emulated, not punished through the misguided legislation making its way through Congress. Compelling ByteDance to shut down or sell the app would not only deprive millions of Americans of a vibrant platform for self-expression, it also sets a dangerous precedent for government overreach in the digital realm.

A version of the TikTok ban already [passed](#) the House of Representatives last month and has been stalled in the Senate. Now, with the TikTok provision attached to what is viewed as must-pass legislation, the Senate could be forced to act. As they deliberate on what to do, senators should weigh carefully the costs and benefits of targeting a single company based on its national origin. They should ask themselves whether they’d like to see U.S. tech companies treated in a similar manner by lawmakers abroad.

Instead of penalizing the app for its success in creating an immensely popular online platform, policymakers should look to TikTok as a model for promoting a more inclusive and intellectually diverse online ecosystem. Banning or forcing the sale of TikTok would be a step in the wrong direction for both free speech and the future of social media.

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James Broughel

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I am a Senior Fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute with a focus on innovation and dynamism. I'm author of the book *Regulation and Economic Growth: Applying Economic Theory to Public Policy*. My writing has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post*. I have also published in scholarly journals, including *Regulation & Governance*, *Contemporary Economic Policy* and *PLOS ONE*. I received my PhD in economics from George Mason University and my BA and MA in economics from Hunter College of the City University of New York.

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TikTok: Are influencers panicking about bans? We asked three to weigh in.

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As talk of banning TikTok grows, the so-called influencers whose livelihoods are linked to the platform aren't panicking – at least, not yet.

Yahoo Finance spoke to three of those influencers, with nearly 5.5 million followers between them. The topic of conversation: How they're thinking about the escalating series of bans on state and university devices, as well as the fiery rhetoric coming out of Washington. For the most part,

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fiery rhetoric coming out of Washington. For the most part, though they're concerned, they haven't yet seen their businesses affected so far.

"The current bans do not have a direct impact on our business," influencer and digital marketer [Chase Chappell](#) told Yahoo Finance. "If they were to ban TikTok for everyone in the U.S., that'd be a cause for concern, as 50% of all our clients come from TikTok specifically. This is also my biggest platform in terms of followers and views, and our business does rely on this platform as a source of growth."

Chappell's business focuses on helping others grow their social media reach and TikTok is a major part of his life. He spends two to four hours a day on the platform, and his business isn't the only one on TikTok that he's apprehensive about. He's worried about the fate of the businesses he deals with as well.

"If TikTok were to be banned, thousands of our clients would be impacted financially as this platform has become a major source of their customer base and revenue," he said. "Not only that, this would have a major economic impact across the U.S., as millions of users are buying items from U.S. companies that they discovered specifically on TikTok."

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Nasdaq 17,622.62 -44.95 (-0.25%)	Russell 2000 2,005.89 -33.26 (-1.63%)		
Crude Oil 78.31 -0.31 (-0.39%)	Gold 2,343.30 +25.30 (+1.09%)		

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RH	228.40
RH	-48.65 (-17.95%)
KAVL	5.33
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Carnival Corporation...	-1.39 (-8.42%)

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Chase Chappell's TikTok page, taken on Jan. 19, 2023.

There's only so much data on the growing role of small

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Chase Crappell's TikTok page, taken on Jan. 19, 2023.

There's only so much data on the growing role of small businesses on TikTok and, candidly, it's worth taking what we have with a grain of salt – but what we do have shows a picture of a platform where the influencer economy is thriving.

Data from digital marketer Higher Visibility suggests that as much as 65% of the most prominent, full-time online creators are using TikTok as their primary platform going into this year. The 'why' is pretty simple – creators and small businesses, which are often one and the same, are frequently drawn to TikTok's now-storied [organic reach](#). Additionally, TikTok itself has been studying small businesses on its platform, [gathering](#) data based on 7,000 responses. Bottom line: As many as 78% of small businesses currently on the platform are planning to increase investment in it.

So, as influencers wait for the Washington-TikTok standoff to play out, what are they doing to protect themselves? For one, many have been diversifying away from TikTok. [Mik Zenon](#), whose TikTok presence focuses on products and "life hacks" like finding the most useful home gadgets on Amazon ([AMZN](#)), has been building out on other platforms for years now.

"If the bans were to ever extend to personal devices, then the impact would be significant," he said. "There was talk of something like this happening in summer 2020 under Trump's presidency. Back then, 100% of my business was on TikTok. I learned quickly the need to have a presence on as many platforms as possible... I have a substantial following now on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube and I have collected tens of thousands of emails over the years. I no longer feel like I am over-leveraged on one platform."

Still, about 25% of Zenon's livelihood is entwined with TikTok.

mik.zenon
Mik Zenon
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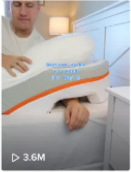


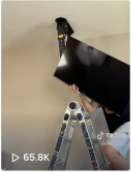
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Seriously ... where has this...

Mik Zenon's TikTok page, taken on Jan. 19, 2023.

Security concerns?

As far as data security is concerned, our Yahoo Finance influencers were mixed on the problem. For Zenon, he's no more worried about TikTok, which is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, than any other platform.

"I've come to accept that all social media platforms collect our personal data to some degree when we use their apps," he said.

Chappell, meanwhile, said the government's concern makes him question the long-term ramifications.

"It certainly makes me question how this could be used against the U.S. in a future scenario, [but] as of right now, I have no specific personal reasons to be worried about," he said. "My only concerns are around potential 'what ifs,' but I can't worry about 'what ifs' all the time, otherwise I'd always be in a worry and that's not good for anyone."

For TikTok's part, the company is in the midst of a negotiation with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to address the government's security concerns. "We believe that the proposal under review by CFIUS—made up of our country's top national security agencies—will address all national security concerns about TikTok so that our community can feel confident in their safety, privacy, and security," a company spokesperson said.

'My followers are everything'

The prospects of the ban aside, TikTok is clearly important to the small businesses on the platform.

For Fafa Araujo, who runs [Fafa Fitness](#) and frequently goes by her first name, the platform has done nothing short of changing her life, she said. She joined TikTok in 2021, and

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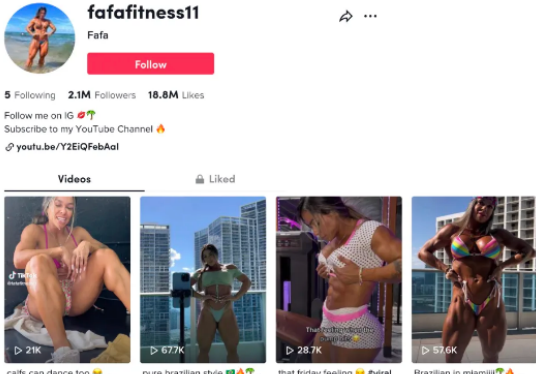
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by her first name, the platform has done nothing short of changing her life, she said. She joined TikTok in 2021, and has gained her 2.1 million followers in the short time since.



Fafa's TikTok page, taken on Jan. 19, 2023.

"I would be really hard for me to move forward right now or even be where I am without TikTok," she told Yahoo Finance.

"TikTok brings me what I'm looking for—people that I can help," she added. "I know it's only been two years for me on TikTok, but it's helped me find my happiness helping others. TikTok is the love of my life."

For Araujo, who is based in Miami, the fear of a ban comes down to her connection with those followers – she doesn't want to lose them, professionally and especially on a personal level.

"My followers are everything," she said. "Without them, what am I?"

Allie Garfinkle is a Senior Tech Reporter at Yahoo Finance. Follow her on Twitter at @agarfinks.

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How Meta, TikTok, and the social media industry are changing to survive

Big Tech preparing for EU's Digital Markets Act

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EXHIBIT 18

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This man has gone viral on TikTok for dancing to Nelly Furtado in front of his bathroom sink

The vibes are immaculate and the dancing is breathtaking

2 YEARS AGO

Frances Gurney | Trends

UK

Jamie Big Sorrel Horse, aka @jamie32bsh, uploaded possibly the best TikTok of all time which shows him dancing in front of his bathroom sink to Say It Right by Nelly Furtado and oh man, it's iconic. The video has since surpassed 146.3 million views and has over 22 million likes. So it's fair to say the dancing Nelly Furtado man is officially a TikTok icon. If you need to jog your memory, or want to watch the video again for the *vibes* then check it out below.

jamie32bsh
Jamie Big Sorrel ...

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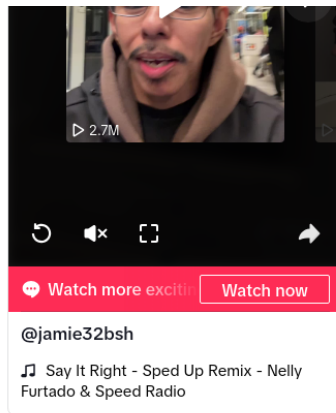
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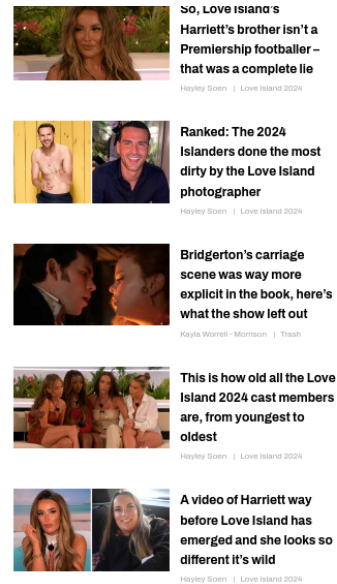
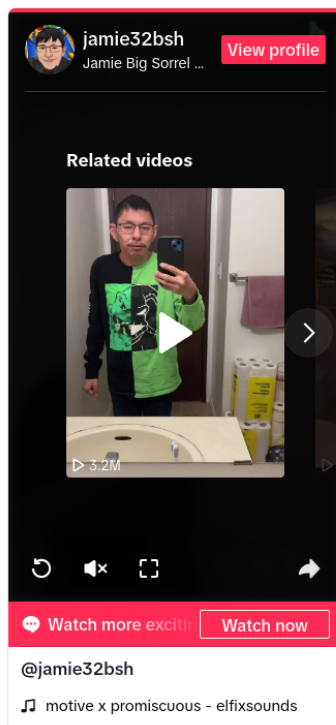
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Since Jamie's original bathroom mirror TikTok video was uploaded, he has been raking in followers, likes and views. He's now at 1.9 million followers and he's gained attraction from some of the biggest creators on TikTok. There have even been calls to get our Nelly Furtado king into the Hype House!!

Recently he uploaded [this](#) video grooving to Ariana Grande's Motive and his dancing is phenomenal to say the least. The top comment says: "POV: He started a new trend and you're here to say you are early to it." And that's exactly right, this bathroom sink Nelly Furtado dancing man did start a trend and we all are absolutely here to stay for it. Let's take a deep ol' dive into his vibey TikTok account:

1. Ariana Grande should be quaking rn

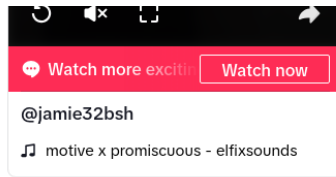


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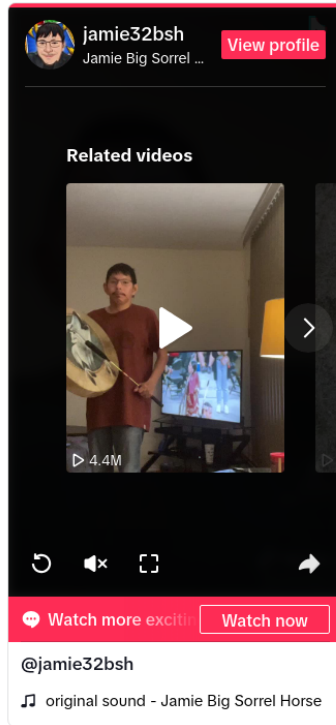
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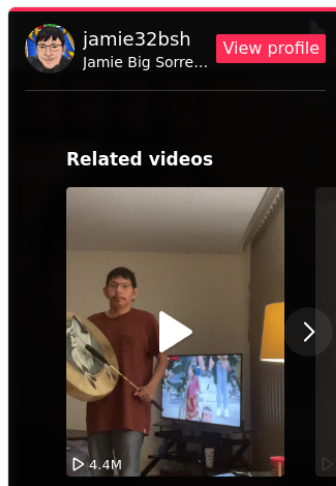
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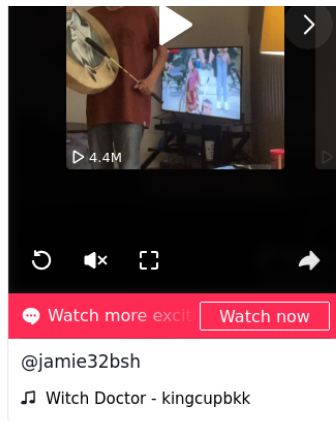


2. Icon energy



3. I have no idea what this is

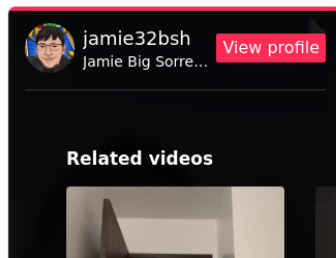




4. Bonk memes are elite, end of



5. Pretty sure he started this trend too x



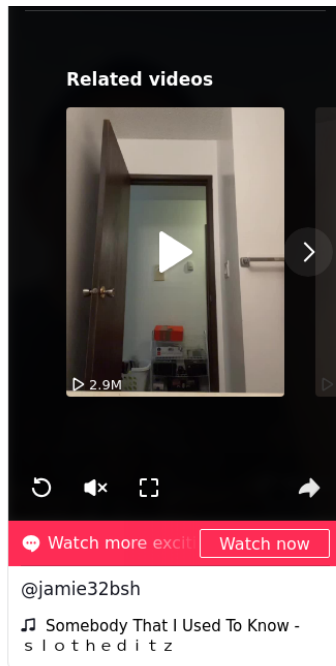
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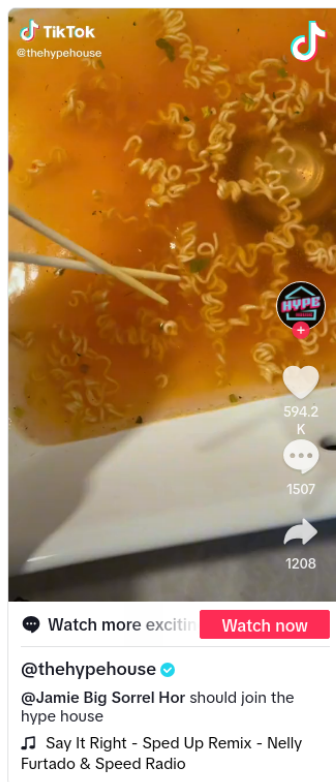
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6. 'Jamie should join the Hype House'



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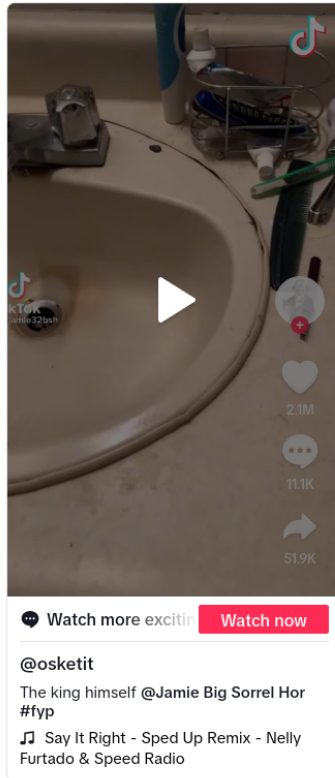
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7. This is sensational



You can follow Jamie our Nelly Furotdo bathroom mirror dancing king on TikTok [here](#).

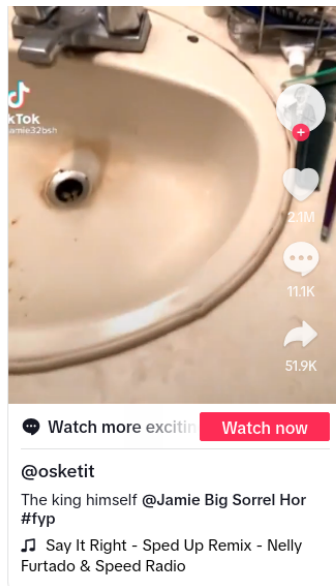
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THE INSULTINGLY HUGE NET WORTHS OF THE POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS, RANKED



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IT'S FAIR TO SAY THEY CAN ALL COMFORTABLY AFFORD A SKY BOX



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EXHIBIT 19

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Viral

MENU

Alex Consani Is TikTok's 2024 It Girl



by **Jillian Glandurco**
Jan. 9, 2024

She's not known for GRWMs or OOTDs. Instead, it's her unique sense of humor that followers love.

If you spend some time exploring the TikTok FYP, chances are you'll probably come across a video of Alex Consani or two. And if her icy blonde hair and effortlessly cool style don't catch your eye, then her hilarious mannerisms and unique sense of humor certainly will. The creator has been making waves on the platform for a few years now, but after another video of hers went viral in late December 2023, she's already on her way to solidifying her spot as TikTok's favorite "It Girl" of 2024.

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Who Is TikToker Alex Consani?

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OK, So, Here's Why Every Video Starts The Same Way Now

By Alexis Morillo



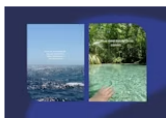
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These 3 Zodiac Pairings Are The Definition Of "Black Cat" & "Golden Retriever" Energy

By Nina Kahn



TikTok's "Blue Mind Theory" Is Your Excuse To Book A Beach Vacation

By Carolyn Steber

Who Is TikTok Alex Consani?

Though TikTok users may have only become aware of her when started making TikToks in 2020, Consani, 20, has been working adjacent to the limelight for longer than you'd think. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area and currently residing in New York City, the creator began her modeling career in 2015 at the age of 12, before signing with IMG Models in 2019. She was able to make her mark on the industry before she was even a teenager by becoming the youngest transgender model in the world at the time.

On TikTok, Consani (who you can find at [@captincrook](#) and [@ms.mawma](#)) has amassed over 3 million followers on the app, but that's nothing compared to the amount of views her videos get. Her most recent TikTok, posted on Dec. 22, accumulated a whopping 29.3 million views, and the model has earned a collective 159.5 million likes across both accounts as of Jan. 9.



TikTok/@captincrook

Unlike other TikTokers, Consani doesn't have a niche or a schtick that audiences can latch onto. She's not interviewing random people on the street with a tiny mic, and despite her fashion background, she doesn't film OOTDs or GRWMs either. Instead, the appeal of Consani's content is her singular sense of humor, absurdist facial expressions, and mesmerizing mannerisms. Most influencers become "It Girls" through styling videos and aesthetically

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MENU

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Consani's Groundbreaking Career

Consani already has several designer-label runway shows under her belt, including Alexander McQueen, Versace, Roberto Cavalli, BOSS By Hugo Boss, Burberry, Chloé, Coperni, and more. She also walked in the Victoria's Secret World Tour fashion show in September 2023 and served as the campaign covergirl for Jean Paul Gaultier's collaboration with KNLWS that same month.

In October 2022, *Vogue* named the creator as one of the Standout Models Of Spring/Summer 2023.



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Going Viral Is A Lifestyle

If you've encountered Consani's indescribable content on the FYP before, you know that her supermodel level of confidence transcends the runway.

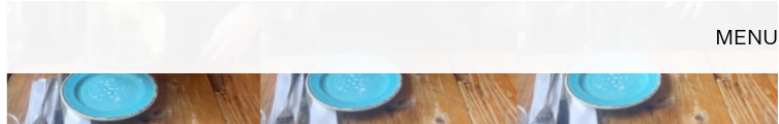
Some of her most viral moments on the app include a video chronicling her struggle to enter NYU's campus with an ID that clearly doesn't belong to her, and a hilarious rendition of "Mean" by Taylor Swift (which earned her a strange look from a fellow customer). She's been known to share some on-set BTS with followers as well, with this video from the Victoria's Secret World Tour fashion show earning over 707.5K likes, and a clip of her shaking like a skeleton during a recent Balenciaga show gaining more than 1.1 million likes.

Most recently, Consani posted a video of herself celebrating with a large carafe of water as if it were a bottle of champagne with the caption, "When they be giving me the fancy [water]." The video has since inspired a host of memes, and the song she used in the OG vid ("Lifestyle" by Rich Gang featuring Young Thug and Rich Homie Quan) has been used in 18.5K videos and counting. The TikTok has received over 4.4 million likes and was posted just in time to be remembered as one of the best viral moments of 2023.



TikTok/@captincrook

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TikTok/@captincrook

Time and again, Consani manages to equally bewilder and inspire her followers. “I gotta get like this I think it would be exposure therapy for social anxiety,” [@carrigangiles](#) commented on the popular video. “There’s just something about this video I can’t stop watching,” wrote [@mylese_spamm](#). Looks like she’s got the makings of a future TikTok “It Girl” to me.

With Fashion Week coming up in February and her dedicated fanbase on TikTok, it’s safe to assume we’ll be seeing a lot more of Alex Consani in 2024.

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Everyone’s Talking About This OG Pimple Patch – Here’s Why



Written by **Deanna Pai**
June 3, 2024

It’s both effective and gentle.

Forget spot treatments. Pimple patches are the go-to zit solution these days, and for good reason: They really do work. But they’re not created equal, with some infused with harsh active ingredients and others that fall off if you sneeze. The number one acne patch brand, [Hero Mighty Patch](#) pimple patches, was among the first brands to bring the South Korean innovation stateside that supports a healing environment for clearer-looking skin to everyone, everywhere.

Bustle



TikTok/@captincrook

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AWARD-WINNING TOOLS, SERUMS AND MORE EDITOR-TESTED BEAUTY FAVORITES

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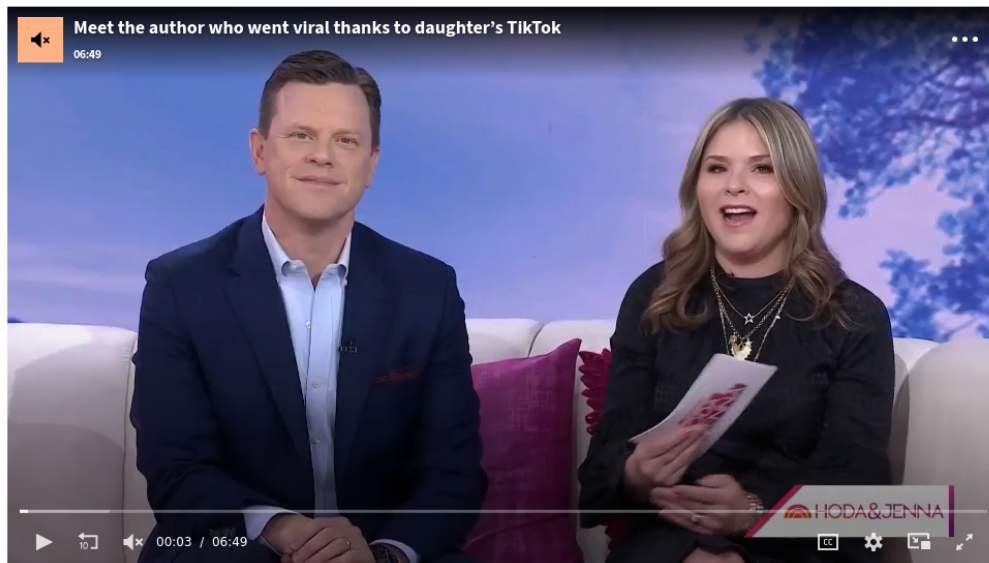
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BOOKS

21 popular BookTok books and why they went viral

Let enthusiastic Booktokers choose your next read.



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March 15, 2023, 8:03 PM UTC / Source: TODAY

By Ryan Hudgins

Before perusing bookstore shelves for the book to break your reading slump, you may just want to scroll through TikTok first. Turns out all the recommendations you need could be right at your fingertips.

Fittingly called BookTok (short for “Book TikTok”), the subcommunity of the social media platform is self-described as “the biggest book club on the planet.”

Enthusiastic readers connect with one another to share book reviews, reactions and curated lists of recommended must reads.

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These readers say BookTok changed the way they read: 'Friends at your fingertips'

For these readers, social media has helped them get off their phones and into books.

TODAY / Feb 13, 2023



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New Electric Cars Are So Cheap Now (Take A Look)

This niche corner of TikTok, with the hashtag #booktok, has amassed over 112 billion views. With numbers like that, no surprise it's a powerful force within the publishing industry with BookTok darlings tending to fly off the shelves. It has been credited for helping authors sell over 20 million books in 2021, according to NPD BookScan data per the [New York Times](#).

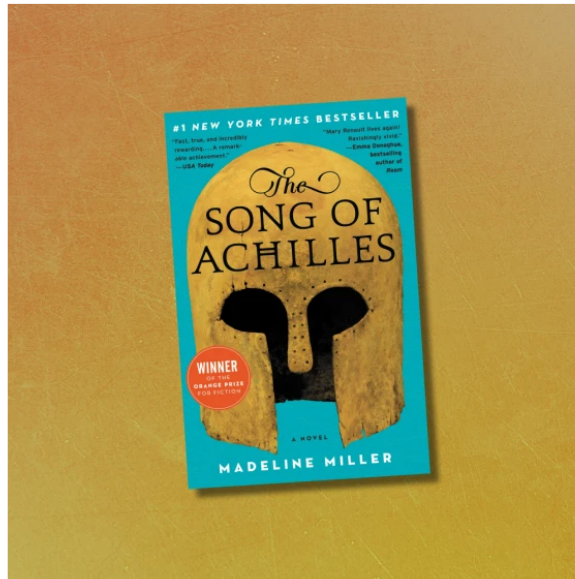
Even Hollywood is taking notice of this BookTok effect with some of the most popular reads being adapted into movies and TV series, like “[It Ends with Us](#)” by Colleen Hoover and “[Daisy Jones & the Six](#)” by Taylor Jenkins Reid.

Trending page-turning titles range from highly anticipated new releases to older hidden gems. So, what is BookTok recommending right now? We rounded up 21 of the most buzz-worthy books on the social media platform to add to your reading list.

TODAY independently determines what we cover and recommend. When you buy through our links, we may earn a commission. [Learn more.](#)

'Song of Achilles' by Madeline Miller





"Song of Achilles" is the Iliad like you've never read it before. Patroclus, in Classics professor Madeline Miller's rendering, is a young prince who's been exiled from his homeland and befriends the powerful Achilles. When the two find out Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped, Achilles joins the heroes of Greece to surround and attack Troy. And Patroclus feels compelled to join him out of both fear and love. But as the two embark on their journey, they will be tested by Fates who will demand a sacrifice.

'Red White and Royal Blue' by Casey McQuiston





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"Red White and Royal Blue" is a bestseller turned TikTok sensation. When photos of a confrontation at a royal wedding between the first son of the United States, Alex Claremont-Diaz, and his nemesis, Prince Henry, heir to the British throne, leak to tabloids, they are forced to do damage control. That is, stage a fake friendship. But as the two spend more time together, it becomes harder to deny that there is a connection between them. And now, as his mother enters a presidential re-election campaign, Alex finds himself in a secret relationship that will impact not only his country, but another, if it's unveiled.

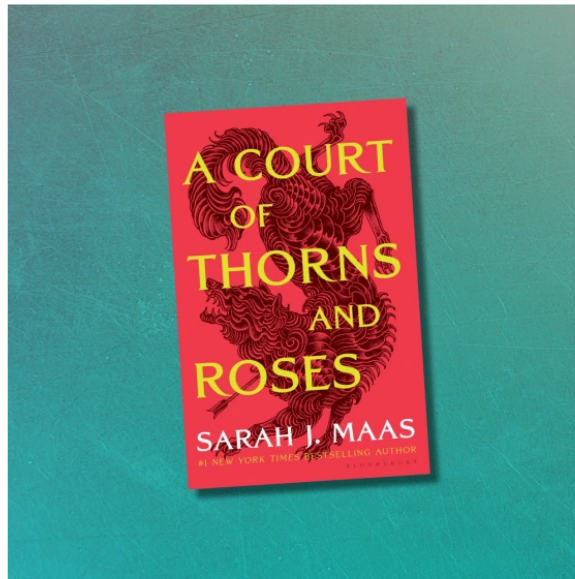
'The Night and its Moon' by Piper C.J.



The first book in a four-part series, which touches on subjects such as race, abuse and LGBTQ+, "The Night and its Moon" has BookTok absorbed in a fantasy that feels so real. Ornhans Nox and Amaris have

The first book in a four-part series, which touches on subjects such as race, abuse and LGBTQ+, "The Night and its Moon" has BookTok absorbed in a fantasy that feels so real. Orphans Nox and Amaris have just been separated. They're just now, for the first time, life outside of an orphanage. Their journeys take them to brothels and to mountains, past foes and assassins and toward a war between humans and magical creatures.

'A Court of Thorns and Roses' by Sarah Maas



Slaughtering a wolf is not a big deal for Feyre. In fact, the 19-year-old huntress thinks nothing of it. But after killing one in the woods one day, the mortal is captured by a creature who demands retribution for her actions. Feyre is taken to a magical land and realizes the beast, Tamlin, is a faerie who used to rule her world. And as she spends more time in her new home, she begins to discover feelings for Tamlin and uncover the truth about his world. But trouble looms ahead, as a wicked shadow grows in the land and Feyre has to find a way to stop it. This fantasy read is the first of a five-part series that has transcended the bookish realm and is being adapted as a TV series on Hulu.

'Someone Else's Shoes' by Jojo Moyes



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'Someone Else's Shoes' by Jojo Moyes



Imagine walking in another person's shoes, *literally*. Two women accidentally swap bags at a London gym, leaving them both not only in possession of new shoes but also a different reality. Sam Kemp is struggling to keep her family afloat but when she suddenly sports six-inch high red crocodile Christian Louboutins, she begins to exude a newfound confidence. And while globetrotting Nisha Cantor is in the midst of the bag-switching chaos, her life is upended when her husband cuts her off financially. Despite the differing adversities the two women face, they are tied together through their shoes. It's a lighthearted book but moving book about the mix-ups and opportunities brought on by colliding with a stranger.

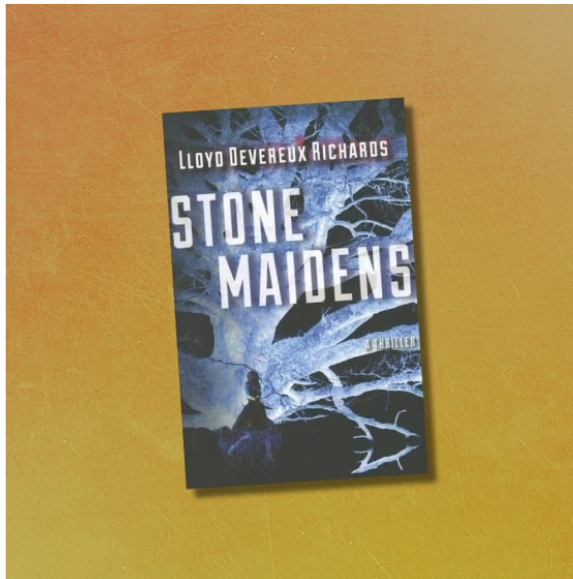
"Stone Maidens" by Lloyd Devereux Richards





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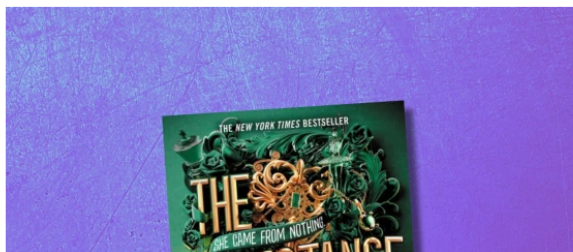
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This mystery novel published in 2012 just skyrocketed onto the bestseller list when the author's daughter posted a TikTok about her dad's modestly selling book.

As the chief forensic anthropologist for the FBI Chicago field office, Christine Prusik has seen her fair share of creepy cases. But her newest assignment seems to top them all. A serial killer is strangling young women and leaving their lifeless bodies in southern Indiana ravines with a curious calling card of carved stone figurines. And even more peculiar, the figurines are replicas of the spirit stones found among the primitive tribe in Papua New Guinea that Christine narrowly escaped while doing field research a decade prior. Now she has to determine if this haunting connection to her past is just a coincidence or is there more at play.

'The Inheritance Games' by Jennifer Lynn Barnes





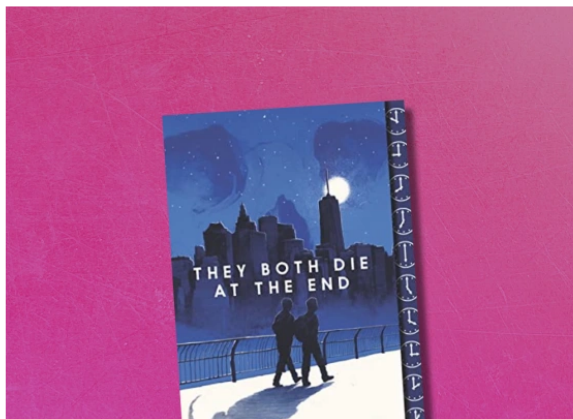
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For Avery Grambs, current plans are simply to survive high school. Then, the unexpected happens and she becomes heir to an enormous fortune. Billionaire Tobias Hawthorne leaves Avery all his money — only she has no clue who he is and why she needs to move into his former home to receive the inheritance. When she arrives at Hawthorne House, occupied by Tobias' family whom he just excluded from his will, she gets caught in a world of wealth and privilege with danger around every turn. And the longer Avery stays, the more certain she becomes that the inheritance and house are clues to something that she'll have to solve in order to just survive. The book, with *Knives Out* vibes, has two other titles in the series with a fourth expected later this year.

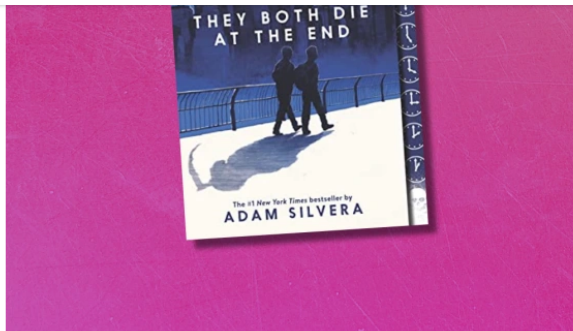
'They Both Die at the End' by Adam Silvera





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For Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio, the hypothetical question of what would you do if you only had 24 hours left to live is more than something to casually consider, it is their reality. On a day in September, shortly after midnight, both teenage boys receive a call from the futuristic Death-Cast notifying them of their impending doom. Mateo and Rufus are each looking for a friend to spend their End Day with and find one another through an app called Last Friend. The two strangers team up for one final hurrah, experiencing life in a way they never have, before going their separate ways forever. The prequel to this 2017 book, "The First to Die at the End," was released last October — and has left BookTokers in tears, too.

'Mexican Gothic' by Silvia Moreno-Garcia





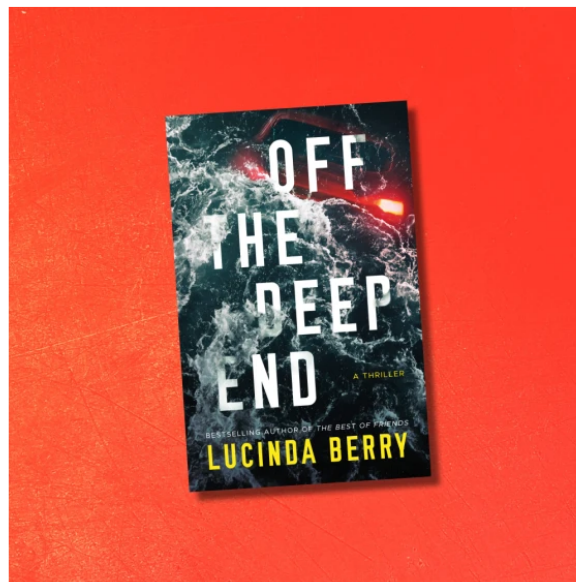
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In the 1950s, glamorous débutante Noemí Taboada heads to the Mexican countryside after her father receives an ominous letter from her newlywed cousin begging for someone to save her from mysterious doom. Arriving at High Place, where her cousin now lives, Noemi uncovers secrets behind the walls of the decaying mansion. Yet she is also drawn to the seductive world of the house, which makes it hard for her to leave High Place behind. This suspenseful read, which offers commentary on racism, generational trauma and domestic abuse, has BookTokers obsessed.

'Off the Deep End' by Lucinda Berry



Jules Hart's idyllic life is shattered when she swerves to avoid hitting a deer in the road and her car, along with her son and his friend, plunges into an icy lake. The therapist turned stay-at-home mom can only manage to save one of the teenage boys from drowning in the frigid murky water, and it's not her son. Ten months after the accident, Jules is still reeling from the death of her child and grappling with the fact that she inadvertently saved the *wrong* boy. But then the boy suddenly and inexplicably vanishes, and Jules is now taking center stage in a police investigation. The author, a former clinical psychologist herself, has captivated BookTok with her ability to



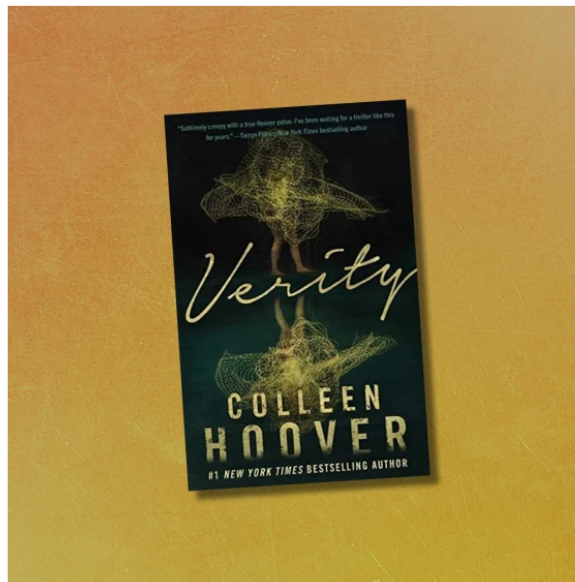
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'Verity' by Colleen Hoover



Lowen Ashleigh is a struggling writer who has just landed the opportunity of a lifetime. She is hired by Jeremy Crawford, the husband of a best-selling author, to complete the remaining books of his injured wife's successful series. In the Crawford home, Lowen uncovers an unfinished autobiography that was never intended to be read — and contains terrible secrets about the family's past. As she begins to have feelings for the author's husband, Lowen struggles to determine if she should share the autobiography with him as it's bound to forever alter his relationship with his wife. This sensational psychological thriller, penned by the same author as "It Ends with Us," has led to debate between BookTokers over its ambiguous ending.

'Things We Never Got Over' by Lucy

Score





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'Things We Never Got Over' by Lucy Score



Lucy Score's steamy romance novels are popular on BookTok for their plot *and*, uh, other things. Check out the three books in Score's Knockemout series: "Things We Never Got Over," "Things We Hide From the Light" and "Things We Left Behind," all following bad boys whose hearts of gold are there, even if they're hard to find at hfirst.

'I Have Some Questions for You' by Rebecca Makkai





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Successful film professor and podcaster Bodie Kane is content forgetting her past — not the least of which includes the murder of her senior year roommate, Thalia Keith, at a boarding school in New Hampshire. But when the Granby School invites her to return to teach a course, Bodie is forced to confront the things that happened in 1995 that she has been trying so hard to forget. Bodie starts to question if the conviction of the school athletic trainer, Omar Evans, was a rush to judgment and if Thalia's real killer could still be out there. And what if she has unknowingly held a clue all along that might have held the key to solving the case. The literary mystery unspools like the [podcast series Serial](#), addressing themes such as racism, classism, sexism and memory.



Rebecca Makkai wrote 'I Have Some Questions for You.' We have some questions for her

The novel tackles society's obsession with true crime.

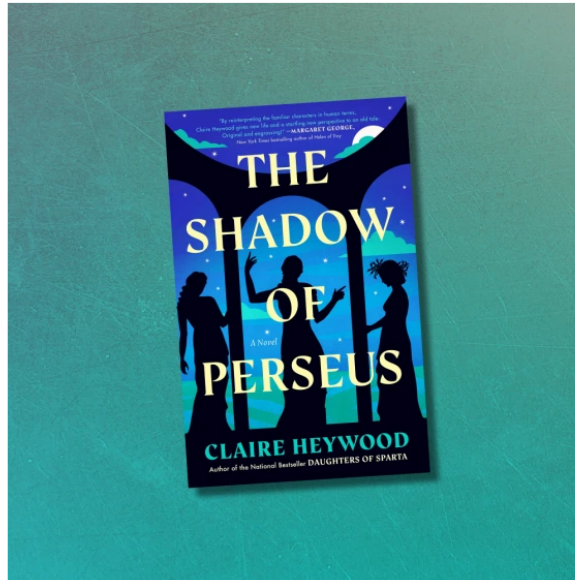
TODAY / Feb 21, 2023

"The Shadow of Perseus" by Claire Heywood





Heywood



The story of Greek mythological hero, Perseus, is told through the voices of three women who are sidelined in the traditional version: His mother, Danae; his temptress, Medusa; and his wife, Andromeda. This all-female mythological reinterpretation takes Perseus down from his heroic pedestal, revealing him to be a man obsessed with his own destiny, not good.

'Dark Matter' by Blake Crouch





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Jason Dessen is an ordinary college physics professor who lives with his family in Chicago. Everything in his life seems predictable until a masked abductor knocks him unconscious. When he awakens, he finds himself strapped to a gurney and surrounded by unfamiliar people in hazmat suits. He is greeted with, "Welcome back, my friend," only Jason has no idea who the man is smiling down at him. In fact, everything seems different. He has a different wife, his son has never been born and he is now a celebrated genius who has achieved something remarkable. As Jason tries to find a way to return to his family, he has to confront how far he will go to reclaim his old life. This science-fiction thriller has captivated BookTok readers who wonder what their lives would look like if they'd made different choices.

'Big Swiss' by Jen Beagin



Greta spends her time transcribing therapy sessions for a sex coach.

Greta spends her time transcribing therapy sessions for a sex coach. She becomes fascinated with the newest client, a repressed married woman whom she refers to as Big Swiss since she's tall, stoic and originally from Switzerland. Greta is especially intrigued by Big Swiss' refreshing attitude surrounding her trauma since they both have a dark past. When the pair accidentally cross paths at a dog park and Greta recognizes Big Swiss' voice, she introduces herself with a fake name. As the two begin a relationship, Greta will go to any length to maintain the connection. This contemporary fiction novel tackles issues surrounding mental health and infidelity.

'Pineapple Street' by Jenny Jackson



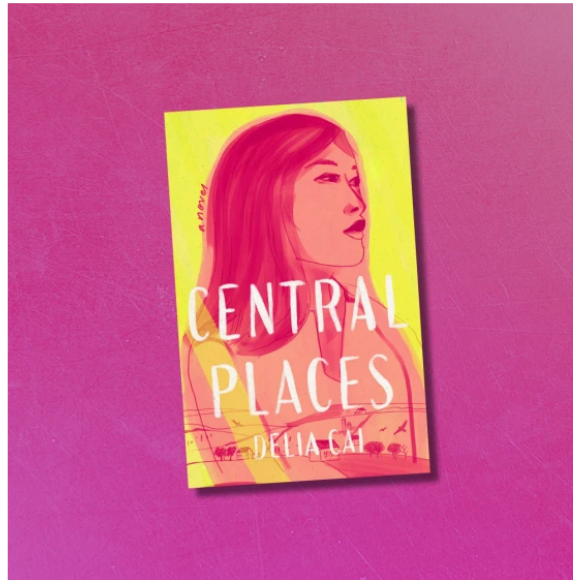
Three women, one Brooklyn family ... and lots of money. Darley, the eldest in the family, gave up her job and her inheritance for motherhood. Sasha, who married into the well-connected family, always feels like an outsider. And the youngest of the family, Georgiana, is in love with someone she ultimately can't have. With shifting narrators, this highly anticipated debut novel by Jenny Jackson gives readers a glimpse of New York's elite.

'Central Places' by Delia Cai



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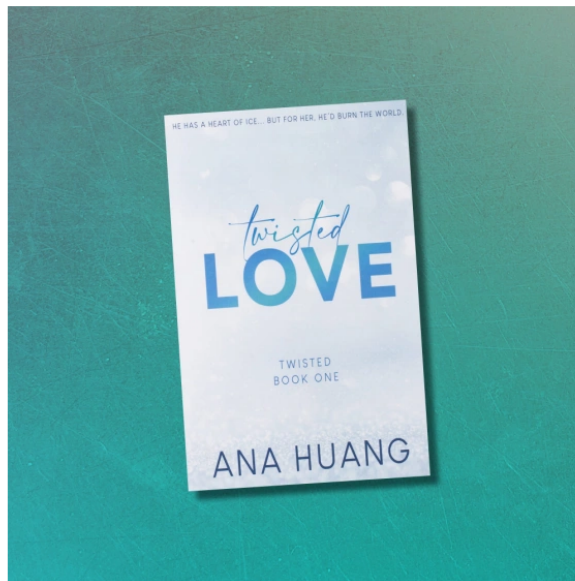
'Central Places' by Delia Cai



Audrey Zhou has traded the small Illinois town she grew up in for New York City. Far from Hickory Grove, she's now living her best life with an impressive high paying job and a faultless fiancé, Ben. In order to move forward in Manhattan, she has to confront unresolved issues that she left behind. Returning home is complicated. Her relationship with her mother is strained and she feels less connected to the friends she left behind. And there is a lingering crush from high school, a laid-back stoner named Kyle, whom she finds herself inexplicably drawn to years later. Audrey tries to navigate her past life without jeopardizing the future she's worked so hard to create. Along the way, she starts to question if it's the new Audrey or the old one that truly brings her happiness. This character-driven read, which includes interracial relationships and challenging family dynamics, has BookTokers hooked.

'Twisted Love' by Ana Huang





Ava Chen is a free spirit who thinks positively, despite her difficult past. When her overprotective brother embarks on a year-long trip, he asks his best friend, Alex Volkov, to look after her. Alex, cloaked in mystery, is running toward success so he can outrun his past. When the pair begin to spend more time together, the undeniable chemistry that develops threatens to destroy them both. The first book in the “Twisted” series, BookTokers are loving the brother’s best friend and opposites attract romance trope.

'Georgie, All Along' by Kate Clayborn





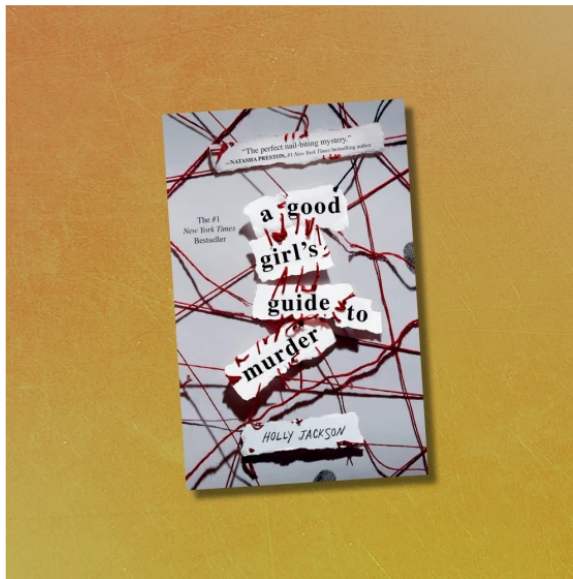
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Georgie Mulcahy always puts others first. Endlessly busy as a personal assistant in Hollywood, she doesn't even have time to realize she puts everyone else first. When she unexpectedly returns home to her small town in Virginia, she has to confront the uncomfortable truth. Worse, Georgie finds her teenage diary which is filled with pages of a dynamic life and dreams for her future. She decides to use it to get back on track and teams up with the former town rebel, Levi Fanning, to cross bucket items off her list. Along the way, they discover that chasing childhood dreams can unexpectedly lead to current happiness. BookTokers are charmed by these two damaged souls trying to better their lives.

'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder' by Holly Jackson



Pippa Fitz-Amobi selects a topic for her high school senior project that



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Pippa Fitz-Amobi selects a topic for her high school senior project that the rest of her Connecticut town would otherwise like to forget. Five years prior, popular high school student Andie Bell was murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh, who then took his own life. And while everyone in Fairview is convinced the crime has been long solved, Pip isn't so sure. As she digs around, her research suggests a trail of secrets that points to Sal being innocent. But it seems like not everyone is happy with her newfound discovery and her own safety may now be threatened. The dark secrets of Fairview don't end when Pip submits her final project, the sequel "Good Girl, Bad Blood" is another favorite among BookTok.

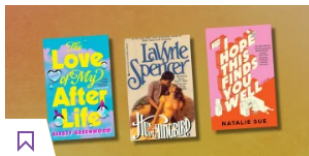


Ryan Hudgins

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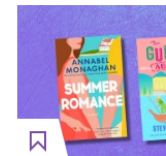
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30 books and 25 years later, Elin Hilderbrand is ready for a vacation

Courtesy Beowulf Sheehan / Amazon



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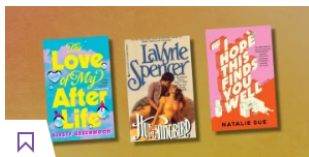


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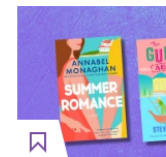
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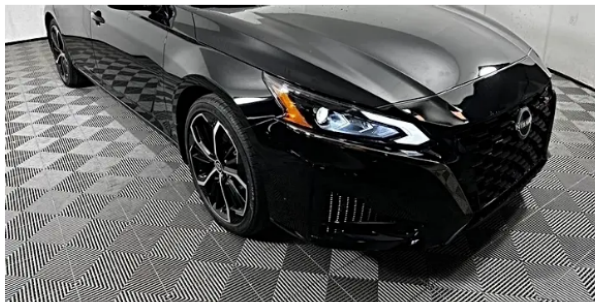
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30 books and 25 years later, Elin Hilderbrand is ready for a vacation



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